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THE MISSION:

OR,

SCENES IN AFRICA.

WRITTEN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY

CAPTAIN MARRYAT.

VOLUME II.

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA BARBARA

THE MISSION.

CHAPTER I.

THE RETURN.

THE delight of the Hottentots at the announcement of the return of the expedition was not to be concealed; and now that they knew that they were retreating from the danger, as they were further removed, they became proportionably brave. We must not include all the Hottentots in this observation as Bremen, Swanevelt, and one or two more were really brave men; but we do refer to

the principal portion of them, with Big Adam at their head, who now flourished and vapoured about, as if he could by himself kill and eat the whole army of the dreaded Quetoo.

As it was the intention of our travellers to pass over the Mambookei chain of mountains, into the Bushman and Koranna territory, they did not return the same route by which they came, but more to the westward, through the territory of the Tambookie Caffres, not at any one time entering upon the territory of the Amakosas, the tribe of Caffres governed by Hinza, who had lent them his warriors.

Voosani, the chief of the Tambookies, was very friendly, and had offered no opposition to their passage through a portion of his domains on their advance. They now lost no time, but continued their journey as fast as they could, although during the day they saw a great quantity of game and were almost

every night saluted with the roarings of the lions.

In a week they found themselves on the banks of the White Kae River, and not far from the foot of the mountains which they intended to pass. Here they halted, with the intention of remaining some few days, that they might unload and re-arrange the packing of their wagons, repair what was necessary, and provide themselves with more oxen and sheep for their journey in the sterile territory of the Bushmen.

During their route, the rumours relative to the army of Quetoo were incessant. He had attacked and murdered Lieut. Farewell and his people, who were on a trading expedition in the interior, and taken possession of and plundered their wagons. Flushed with his success over white people armed with muskets, Quetoo had now resolved to turn his army to the southward, and attack the tribes of the Amaponda Caffres,

governed by Fakoo, and the missionary station of Morley, lately established near the coast, between the St. John and the Umtata rivers.

To effect this, Quetoo commenced his ravages upon all the lesser tribes tributary to Fakoo, and having put them to indiscriminate slaughter, driven away their cattle, and burnt their kraals, his army advanced to the missionary station, which the missionaries were compelled to desert, and fall back upon the St. John River.

One of the men belonging to the tribe near Morley came to the caravan where our travellers had halted, and on being questioned as to the loss they had experienced, cried out, "Ask not how many are killed, but how many are saved: our wives, where are they? and our children, do you see any of them?"

But Fakoo, the chief of the Amapondas, had roused himself and collected his army. He resolved upon giving battle to the enemy.

He found the Amaquibi encamped in a forest, and he surrounded them with a superior army; he then contrived, by attacking and retreating, to lead them into a position from which there was no escape but by the pass by which they had entered, and which he completely blocked up with his own forces.

The Amaquibi could not retreat, and a furious conflict took place, which ended in the destruction of the whole of Quetoo's army. Quetoo himself was not present, as he still remained confined with the wound he had received in the prior engagement, in which he had been victorious. A portion of Fakoo's army was sent against him, and he fled with the loss of all the cattle and treasures he had collected; and thus was the invading force at last totally dispersed and not heard of any more.

This news was very satisfactory to our travellers, as they did not know whether they would

have had time to make their arrangements, if Quetoo's army had been victorious; and it was still more pleasing to the Hottentots, who were now even braver than before, all lamenting that they had not remained on the banks of the Umtata River, where the combat took place, that they might have assisted at the destruction of the invaders.

It was towards the end of August, before our travellers had made their preparations and were ready for a start. They had decided to try the pass through the Mambookei chain of mountains, to the eastward of the one named the Stormbergen, and as they expected to meet with some difficulties, it was decided that the Caffre warriors should not be dismissed till they had arrived at the Bushman territory; they proposed then to turn to the N.W., so as to fall in with that portion of the Orange River which was known by the name of the Vaal or Yellow River, crossing the Black or

Cradock River, which is also another branch of the Orange River.

This arrangement was made, that they might get into the country more abounding with game, and better furnished with water than any other portion of the sterile deserts which they had to pass through.

Having as usual kept holy the Lord's day, on the Monday morning they started in high spirits, and with their cattle in excellent order. The passage through the ravine was very difficult; they had to fill up holes, roll away stones, and very often put double teams to drag the wagons.

They made but ten miles on the first day, and found the night cold, after the heat to which they had been subjected. The second day was also one of toil and danger, but on the third they found that they had commenced the descent, and the whole Bushman country was spread before them. But the descent was even

more perilous than the ascent, and it was not without great exertion that they saved their wagons from falling over the precipices.

On the fourth evening they had crossed the mountains, and were now at the foot of them on the western side. It was with difficulty that they collected wood enough to make their fires for the night, and the continual roaring told them that they were now in the domain of the lion and his satellites.

At break of day, they all rose, that they might view the country which they were about to traverse. It was one wild desert of sand and stones, interspersed with small shrubs, and here and there a patch of bushes; apparently one vast dry, arid plain, with a haze over it, arising from the heat. Our travellers, however, did not at first notice this change; their eyes were fixed upon the groups of quaggas and various antelopes, which were strewed over the whole face of the country; and as soon as they had taken

their breakfast, they mounted their horses in pursuit. It had been their intention to have dismissed the Caffres on that morning, but the chief of the band pointed out that it would be as well that they should kill some game, to provide them with food for their journey back ; and our travellers approved of the suggestion, as it would save their sheep.

Alexander and the Major set off with Bremen, Swanevelt, and Omrah on horse-back, while the Caffres on foot kept well up with them. The other Hottentots were ordered to remain with Swinton at the encampment, as they had to repair the damages done to the wagons in crossing the mountains.

Omrah had shewn himself so useful, that he had been permitted to practise with a fowling-piece carrying ball, and had proved himself very expert. He now was mounted on the Major's spare horse ; that, in case the Major's was knocked up, he might change it, for Omrah's weight was a mere nothing.

The plan of the chase was, that the Caffres should spread in a half-circle, and conceal themselves as much as possible, while those on horseback should turn the animals and drive them to their direction. As they advanced on the plain, they discovered what the haze had prevented their seeing at early dawn, that the plain was covered with a variety of beautiful flowers, of the amaryllis and other tribes, and with the hills of ants and the ant-eater's holes, which latter were very dangerous to the horses.

The sun was now up in the heavens and blazed fiercely; the heat was intense, although still early in the day. When they turned their heads towards the mountains which they had passed, they were struck with astonishment at the grandeur of the scene: rocks and cliffs in wild chaos, barren ridges and towering peaks, worn by time into castellated fortresses and other strange shapes, calling to their fancy the ruins of a former world. With the exception

of a pool of water near to which the caravan had halted, not a vestige of that element was to be seen in any direction ; all was one plain, ending only in the horizon, without a tree, the line only broken by the groups of animals, and the long necks of the packs of ostriches in the distance.

If, however, the vegetable kingdom was deficient, the animal was proportionably abundant, and Alexander and the Major were soon at their speed after a troop of quaggas and zebras, which they succeeded in turning towards the Caffres. As soon as the animals had entered the radius of the half-circle, and were within distance, they checked their horses and opened their fire upon them ; at the same time the Caffres shewed themselves, and the animals were for a time confounded by finding themselves so nearly surrounded.

During their hesitation, and while they attempted to break through here and there,

and then turned again, several were brought to the ground by the guns of the mounted party, till at last, as if they had summoned up their resolution, the whole herd, led by a splendid male, burst away in a direction close to the horsemen, and made their escape from the circle in a cloud of dust, scattering the stones behind them as they fled.

The Caffres ran up to the animals which lay wounded, and put them out of their misery by inserting the point of their assaguays into the spine, which caused immediate death. Seven animals were killed, three zebras and four quaggas; and as Swinton had requested that they might not be cut up till he had ascertained if he required their skins, Omrah was sent back to bring him to where they were lying.

Swinton soon came, and Alexander said to him, "Now, Swinton, let us know if you want any of the skins of these animals to preserve."

“No,” replied Swinton, “I have them already; I just thought it possible that you might have killed a zebra.”

“Well, have we not? there are three of them.”

“No, my good fellow, they are not of the real zebra species, they belong to a class described by Burchell, the traveller, which is termed the striped quagga. The quagga and striped quagga, as you may see, have the ears of a horse, while the zebra has those of the ass. The true zebra hardly ever descends upon the plains, but lives altogether upon the mountainous regions; occasionally it may be found, it is true, and that is the reason why I came to see.”

“Are they good eating, these animals?”

“The quagga is very indifferent food, but the striped quagga is very passable; so if you intend to save any for our dinner, pray let it be some of the latter. Have you done hunting to-day?”

“Yes,” replied the Major, “if Wilmot is of my opinion; I think we had better not work our horses any more just now; the plain is so full of large holes,—ant-eaters’ holes, Bremen says they are.”

“Yes, they are ant-eaters’ holes, and very dangerous; I have seen them several feet deep. If we do not start to-day, I will ask the Hottentots to try and procure one for me to-night, as I wish to have a stuffed specimen.”

“We do not intend to start till to-morrow morning,” replied Alexander; “we must dismiss the Caffres to-night, that they may be also ready to go home to-morrow. They will now have provisions enough.”

Our travellers now rode back to the caravan, leaving the Caffres to bring home the flesh. As soon as they had dined, the chief of the warriors was desired to come with all his men, and Alexander then made every man a handsome present, consisting of tobacco, snuff, cloth, knives, and beads. To the chief of the

band he gave three times as much as the others, and then, having delivered to him a very liberal collection of articles for their King Hinza, Alexander told the chief to acquaint the king that he had been very much pleased with the conduct of the men, and thanked his Majesty for the loan of them, and requested that his Majesty would accept of the packet of articles which he had selected for him.

He then thanked the men for their good conduct, told them to take all the flesh that they wished for the journey, and stated that they were at liberty to depart that evening or the next morning, as they thought proper. The Caffres were perfectly satisfied with Alexander's liberality, and the chief of the warriors, making a short speech in reply, retired with his men.

"Well, I'm very sorry that these fine fellows are leaving," said the Major.

"And so am I, but I could not well detain

them, and they said that they could not go further with us without the king's permission," replied Alexander.

"Of course not," replied the Major; "but that does not lessen my regret at their departure; they have been both steady and brave, as well as active and willing, and I do not expect that our Hottentots will serve us so well."

"You are right not to expect it, Major," replied Swinton; "if you did, you would be miserably disappointed. If they knew now where we were going, they would desert us. The only hold that we have upon the greater number of them is their fear; they go forward because they are afraid to go back; but if they could get hold of our horses, with their guns and ammunition, they would leave us as soon as we advanced in the desert."

"Very true, I fear; but we have a few stanch fellows among them, and two at least whom we can depend upon,—Bremen and Swanevelt."

“How far is it from here to the Black River, Swinton?”

“About forty miles; not so much perhaps to the river’s bed, but at least that, if not more, before we shall fall in with any water at this season of the year.”

“We must not fail to fill our water-kegs before we leave this.”

“No, for we shall have no water to-night, that is certain. We cannot travel more than twenty miles over such a country as this; for, turning here and there to avoid the holes and ant-hills, the twenty miles will be at least thirty,” said Swinton; “but now I must go and tell the Hottentots to find me what I want; a pound of tobacco will procure it, I have no doubt.”

“But I have mine,” observed the Major, after Swinton was gone; “we are too near the pool, and we shall be surrounded with lions to-

night; the Hottentots may pretend that they will go, but they will not."

"One cannot well blame them; I'm sure a pound of tobacco would not persuade me to put my head into a lion's mouth; but I agree with you, we are too near the pool, and as we must collect the cattle to secure them during the night, I think we had better fill our water-kegs, and then yoke and take up a position for the night about half a mile farther off. But here comes Swinton, who can give us his advice."

As Swinton agreed with them, they yoked the oxen, and drove forward about a mile from the pool; they then secured them to the wagons and lighted large fires round the caravan.

The Major was correct as regarded the Hottentots procuring an ant-eater for Swinton; they would not leave the fires, and the continual approach of the lions during the night

proved that they were wise in so doing. There was no occasion for the lions to roar; the moaning of Begum, and her clinging to the Major; the trembling of the dogs, and the uneasiness of the cattle, invariably gave notice of lions being at hand. Shots were fired off during the night to keep them at a distance, but otherwise the night was passed away undisturbed.

They started the following morning at day-break, and, at the same time, the Caffres took their departure to their own country. The ground over which the caravan travelled was stony and sandy at intervals, and they had not proceeded far before they again discovered a great variety of game dispersed over the level plain. They did not, however, attempt to pursue them, as they were anxious to go on as far as possible, so as to give the oxen an opportunity of picking up what little food they could

during the middle of the day, at which time the Major and Alexander proposed that they should go in pursuit of game. But before they had travelled three hours, they were surprised at a cloud of dust, which obscured the horizon, in the direction they were proceeding.

“What can that be?” said Alexander.

“I think it is springbok,” said Bremen, the Hottentot.

“Springbok, why there must be thousands and thousands of them.”

“I believe that Bremen is right,” said Swinton; “it must be one of the migratory herds of springboks; I have never seen them, but I have often been told of them.”

The body of antelopes now advanced towards them, keeping on a straight path, and to state their numbers would have been impossible; there might have been fifty, or one hundred thousand, or more. As far as the eye could see in any direction, it was one

moving mass, covering the whole plain. As they approached the caravan, those nearest huddled on one side and occasionally bounded away with the remarkable springs made by this animal, and from which it has its name, alighting not upon the earth, but, for want of room, upon the backs of its companions, and then dropping in between the ranks.

A hazy vapour arose from these countless herds as they moved on, and more than once the Hottentots, who were standing on the wagons, which had been stopped as the herd came up to them, pointed out a lion which was journeying with the crowds to feast at his leisure. The animals appeared very tame, and several were killed close to the wheels of the wagons for the evening's supper. Notwithstanding that the herd moved at a rapid pace, it was more than two hours before the whole had passed by.

“ Well,” observed Alexander, “ I can now

say that I have seen no want of game in Africa. Where will they go to?"

"They will go directly on to the southward," replied Swinton; "the migration of these animals is one of the most remarkable proofs of the fecundity of animal life. Like the ants, they devour every thing before them, and if we journey in the direction they have come from, we shall find no food for the cattle until after the rains. After the rains fall, these animals will return to their former pastures. It is the want of food which has brought them so far to the southward."

"Their track is evidently from the north and eastward," said the Major; "had we not better change our course more to the northward?"

"No, I should think not; they have probably travelled on this side of the Nu Gareip or Black River. We shall have neither water nor food for the cattle to-night, and therefore I

think we had better go on as we are going, so as to make sure of water for them to-morrow at all events. It's useless now stopping to feed the cattle, we had better continue right on till the evening; we shall sooner arrive at the river, and so gain by it."

It was but half an hour before dark that they unyoked the tired oxen. Water or grass there was none; and, what was another misfortune, they could not find sufficient wood of any kind to keep up the necessary fires during the night. All they could collect before dark was but enough for one fire, and they considered it better, therefore, that only one should be lighted.

The wagons were drawn up so as to form a square, inside of which were tied the horses; the sheep were driven underneath, and the oxen were tied up outside. They feasted well themselves upon the delicate meat of the springboks, but the poor animals had neither

food nor water after their hard day's journey.

As soon as they had supped they retired to their wagons, and the Hottentots remained by the side of the fire, which was but frugally supplied, that it might last till morning; but that there were lions prowling in the vicinity, was evident from the restlessness of the oxen, who tried to break the leathern thongs with which they were fastened.

The moon had just risen, and shewed an imperfect light, when they perceived the bodies of some animals between them and the horizon. They appeared very large, as they always do in an imperfect light, and the Hottentots soon made out that they were five or six lions, not forty yards distant. The truth of this supposition was confirmed by an angry roar from one of them, which induced most of the Hottentots to seize their guns, and some to creep under the wagons.

The oxen now struggled furiously to escape, for the roar of the lions had spread consternation.

Our travellers heard it in their wagons, and were out with their guns in a minute. At last one of the oxen broke loose, and, as it was running behind its companions, as if seeking a more secure shelter, being not more than three or four yards from them, another roar was followed by a spring of one of the lions, which bore the animal to the earth.

The Major and Wilmot were advancing before the fire to the attack, when the animal for a moment let go his prey, and was about to spring upon them. Bremen called out for them to retreat, which they did, as the animal advanced step by step towards them.

Satisfied with their retiring, the lion then went to his prey, and dragged it to a distance of about fifty yards, where it commenced its meal; and they distinctly heard—although they

could not plainly distinguish—the tearing of the animal's flesh and the breaking of its bones by the lion; while its bellowings were most pitiful.

They all now fired in the direction where they heard the noise—the lion replied to the volley by a tremendous roar, and rushed up within twenty yards of the wagons, so as to be distinctly visible. Bremen begged our travellers not to molest the animal, as it was evidently very hungry and very angry, and would certainly make a spring upon them, which must be attended with disastrous effects.

The other lions were also now moving round and round the camp, they therefore reloaded their guns and remained still, looking at the lion tearing and devouring his prey.

“We must be quiet here,” said Bremen to Alexander; “there are many lions round us, and our fire is not sufficient to scare them away, and they may attack us.”

“Would it not be better to fire our guns, —that would frighten them?”

“Yes, Sir, it would frighten the other lions, perhaps, but it would enrage this one so near to us, and he would certainly make a charge. We had better throw a little gunpowder upon some ashes now and then, as we have but a small fire, the flash will drive them away for the time.”

In the meantime the lion was making his meal upon the poor ox, and when any other of the hungry lions approached him, he would rush at them, and pursue them for some paces with a horrible growl, which made not only the poor oxen, but the men also, to shudder as they heard it.

In this manner was the night passed away, every one with his gun in his hand, expecting an immediate attack ; but the morning at last dawned, to the great relief of them all. The lions had disappeared, and they walked out to

where the old lion had made his meal, and found that he had devoured nearly the whole of the ox ; and such was the enormous strength of his jaws, that the rib-bones were all demolished, and the bones of the legs, which are known as the marrow-bones, were broken as if by a hammer.

“ I really,” observed the Major, “ have more respect for a lion, the more I become intimate with his feline majesty.”

“ Well, but he is off,” observed Swinton, “ and I think that we had better be off too.”

CHAPTER II.

THE oxen were yoked, and the caravan proceeded at a slow pace to gain the wished-for river. As our travellers walked their horses,—for the poor animals had been without food or water for twenty-four hours, and all idea of chasing the various herds of animals which were to be seen in their path was abandoned for the present—Swinton remarked, “We are not far from the track of the Mantatees, when they made their irruption upon the Caffres about eighteen months back.”

“I was intending to ask you for some information on that point, Swinton. There has been

more than one irruption into the country from the natives to the northward. Mr. Fairburn gave me a very fair idea of the history of the Cape Colony, but we were both too much engaged after our arrival in Cape Town, for me to obtain further information."

"I will, you may be assured, tell you all I know," replied Swinton; "but you must not expect to find in me a Mr. Fairburn. I may as well remark, that Africa appears to be a country not able to afford support to a dense population, like Europe; and the chief cause of this is the great want of water, occasionally rendered more trying by droughts of four or five years' continuance."

"I grant that such is the case at present," observed the Major; "but you well know that it is not that there is not a sufficient quantity of rain, which falls generally once a year; but because the water which falls is carried off so quickly. Rivers become torrents, and

in a few weeks pour all their water into the sea, leaving, I may say, none for the remainder of the year."

"That is true," replied Swinton.

"And so it will be, until the population is not only dense, but, I may add, sufficiently enlightened and industrious. Then, I presume, they will take the same measures for securing a supply of water throughout the year which have been so long adopted in India, and were formerly in South America by the Mexicans. I mean that of digging large tanks, from which the water cannot escape, except by evaporation."

"I believe that it will be the only remedy."

"Not only the remedy, but more than a remedy ; for, tanks once established, vegetation will flourish, and the vegetation will not only husband the water in the country, but attract more."

"All that is very true," replied Swinton,

“and I trust that the time will come, when not only this land may be well watered with the dew of Heaven, but that the rivers of grace may flow through it in every direction, and the tree of Christ may flourish.”

“Amen,” replied Alexander.

“But to resume the thread of my discourse,” continued Swinton; “I was about to say, that the increase of population, and I may add the increase of riches, for in these nomadic tribes cattle are the only riches, is the great cause of these descents from the north; for, the continued droughts which I have mentioned of four or five years, compel them to seek for pasture elsewhere, after their own is burnt up. At all events, it appears that the Caffre nations have been continually sustaining the pressure from without, both from the northward and the southward, for many years.

“When the Dutch settled at the Cape, they took possession of the country belonging to the

Hottentot tribes, driving the few that chose to preserve their independence into the Bushman and Namaqua lands, increasing the population in those countries, which are only able to afford subsistence to a very scattered few. Then again, they encroached upon the Caffres, driving them first beyond the Great Fish River, and afterwards still more to the northward. The Bushmen tribes of hill Hottentots, if we may so term them, have also been increased by various means, notwithstanding the constant massacres of these unhappy people by the Dutch boors ; moreover, we have by our injudicious colonial regulations added another and a new race of people, who are already considerable in their numbers."

" Which do you refer to ?"

" To the people now known by the name of Griquas, from their having taken possession of the Griqua country. They are the mixed race between the Hottentots and the whites. By

the Dutch colonial law, these people could not hold possession of any land in the colony ; and this act of injustice and folly has deprived us of a very valuable race of men, who might have added much to the prosperity of the colony. Brave and intelligent, industrious to a great degree, they, finding themselves despised on account of the Hottentot blood in their veins, have migrated from the colony and settled beyond the boundaries. Being tolerably well provided with firearms, those who are peaceably inclined can protect themselves, while those who are otherwise, commit great depredations upon the poor savages, following the example shewn them by the colonists, and sweeping off their cattle and their property, in defiance of law and justice. You now perceive, Alexander, how it is that there has been a pressure from the southward."

"That is very evident," replied the Major.

"Perhaps I had better proceed to the north-

ward by degrees, and make some mention of the Caffre tribes, which are those who have suffered from being, as it were, pressed between encroachments from the north and the south. The Caffre race is very numerous; the origin of the general term Caffre, which means Infidel, and no more, is not known, any more than is that of the term Hottentot."

"A proof of what we found out at school," observed the Major, "that nicknames, as they are termed, stick longer than real ones."

"Precisely," replied Swinton; "our acquaintance is mostly with the more southern Caffres, who occupy the land bordering on the east coast of Africa, from the Cape boundary to Port Natal. These are the Amakosa tribe, whose warriors have just left us; the Tambookies, whose territory we have recently quitted, and to the northward of them by Port Natal, the Hambonas. These are the Eastern Caffres."

“ On the other side of the Mambookei chain of mountains, and in the central portion of Africa, below the tropic, are the Bechuanas, who inhabit an extent of country as yet imperfectly known to us. These may be termed the Central Caffres.

“ On the western side of the African coast, and above Namaqua Land, whose inhabitants are probably chiefly of the Hottentot race, we have the Damaras, who may be classed as the Western Caffres; with these we have had little or no communication.

“ All these tribes speak the Bechuana or Caffre language, with very slight variation; they are all governed by chiefs or kings, and subdivided into numerous bodies, but they are all Caffres. Of their character I have only to observe, that as far as we have experienced, the Caffres of the eastern coast, which we have just left, are very superior to the others, in courage and in every other good quality.

Now, have I made myself intelligible, Alexander?"

"Most clearly so."

"I nevertheless wish that we were sitting down in some safe place, instead of travelling on horseback over this withering tract, and that I had the map before me to make you understand me better."

"I will refer to the map, as soon as I can," replied Alexander; "but I have studied the map a great deal, and therefore do not so much require it."

"All these Caffre tribes live much the same life; their wealth is in cattle; they are partly husbandmen, partly herdsmen, and partly hunters; and their continual conflicts with the wild beasts of the country prepare them for warriors. The Eastern Caffres, from whom we have lately parted, are the most populous; indeed, now that we have taken from them so much of their country, they have scarcely pasturage for

their cattle. I have said that the Eastern Caffres' territory extends as far as the latitude of Port Natal, but it formerly extended much further to the northward, as it did to the southward, before we drove them from their territory; indeed as far north as Delagoa Bay; all the country between Port Natal and Delagoa Bay being formerly inhabited by tribes of Caffres. I believe, Alexander, that Mr. Fairburn gave you a history of the celebrated monarch, Chaka, the king of the Zoolus?"

"Yes, he did."

"Well, it was Chaka who overran that country I am now speaking of, and drove out all the tribes who occupied it, as well as a large portion of the Bechuana tribes who inhabited lands more to the northward. Now the irruptions we have had into the Caffre and Bechuana country bordering upon the colony have been wholly brought about by the devastations committed by Chaka. Of course I

refer to those irruptions which have taken place since our knowledge and possession of the Cape. I have no doubt but that such irruptions have been continued, and that they have occurred once in every century for ages. They have been brought about by a population increasing beyond the means of subsistence, and have taken place as soon as the overplus has required it.

“The migrations of the springboks, which we witnessed yesterday, may be more frequent, but are not more certain than those of the central population of Africa. The Caffres themselves state that they formerly came from the northward, and won their territory by conquest; and the Hottentots have the same tradition as regards themselves.

“The invasion of the Mantatees, as they are called (and by the Eastern Caffres Ficani), was nothing more than that of a people dispossessed of their property, and driven from their terri-

tory by the Zoolus, under Chaka ; and, indeed, this last army under Quetoo, which has been destroyed within this month, may be considered as invading from a similar cause. Having separated from Chaka, Quetoo could find no resting-place, and he therefore came to the southward, with the intention of wresting the territory from the Caffres, in which he has failed. Had he not failed, and been cut off by the Caffres, he would have destroyed them, and thus made room for his own people."

"Of course ; for the end of all these invasions and migrations must be in such a sacrifice of human life as to afford sustenance and the means of subsistence to those who remain," observed the Major.

"Precisely ; and such must continue to be the case on this continent, until the arts and civilization have taught men how to increase the means of subsistence. To produce this, Chris-

tianity must be introduced; for Christianity and civilization go hand in hand."

"But the Mantatees or Ficani, who were they?"

"I have already said they were northern Caffre tribes, dispossessed of their territory by Chaka. The names of the tribes we do not know. Mantatee, in the Caffre language, signifies an invader, and Ficani also, marauders; both terms applicable to the people, but certainly not the names of the tribes.

I believe, now, I have said enough on the subject to allow me to enter upon the history of this last invasion; but, to tell you the truth, the heat is so overpowering, and I feel my tongue so parched, that you must excuse me for deferring this account till another opportunity. As soon as we are a little more at our ease I will give you the history of the Mantatees."

"We are much obliged to you for what you have told us, Swinton, and will spare you for

the present," replied Alexander. "What animals are those?—look!"

"They are gnoos," replied Swinton. "There are two varieties of them, the common gnoo, and the brindled gnoo. They form an intermediate link between the antelope family and the bovine, or ox, and they are very good eating."

"Then, I wish we were able to go after them. They do not seem afraid of us, but approach nearer at every gallop which they make."

"Yes, although shy, they have a great deal of curiosity," replied Swinton. "Watch them now."

The animals bounded away again, as Swinton spoke, and then returned to gaze upon the caravan, stirring up the dust with their hoofs, tossing their manes, and lashing their sides with their long tails, as they curveted and shook their heads, sometimes stamping as if in de-

fiance, and then flying away like the wind, as if from fear.

“They are safe this time,” observed Major Henderson ; “ but another day we will try their mettle.”

“ You will find them fierce and dangerous when wounded, Sir,” said Bremen, who had ridden up. “ We are not many miles from the river, for the cattle begin to sniff.”

“ I am delighted to hear you say so ; for then there must be water near. But the haze and glare together are so great that we cannot distinguish above two miles, if so much.”

“ No, Sir,” replied the Hottentot ; “ but I can see well enough to see *them*,” continued he, pointing with his finger to a rising ground about a hundred yards off, on the right of them. “ One, two, three—there are five of them.”

“ What are they ?” said the Major, looking in the direction pointed out. “ I see ; they are lions.”

“Yes, Sir, but we must take no notice of them, and they will not annoy us. They are not hungry.”

“You are right,” said Swinton; “we must go right on, neither stopping nor hastening our speed. Let the driver look to the oxen; for, tired as they are, the smell of the lions is sufficient to give them ungovernable strength for the moment.”

“Well,” said the Major, “bring us our guns, Bremen. I am willing to accept the armed neutrality, if they will consent to it.”

The caravan passed on; the lions remaining crouched where they were, eyeing them, it is true, but not rising from their beds. The oxen, however, either through fear of the lions, or the scent of water near, became more brisk in their motions, and in half an hour they perceived a line of trees before them, which told them that they were near the bed of the Nu Gareip or Cradock River.

The poor animals redoubled their exertions, and soon arrived at the banks. Bremen had ridden forward and reported that there still was water in the river, but only in pools. As the herbage was destroyed on the side where they were, they would have crossed the bed of the river before they unyoked, but that they found impossible. The animals were so impatient for the water, that, had they not been released, they would have broken the wagons.

Horses, oxen, and sheep all plunged into the pools together, and for some minutes appeared as though they would never be satisfied. They at last went out, but soon returned again, till their sides were distended with the quantity of the element which they had imbibed.

An hour was allowed for the animals to rest and enjoy themselves, and then they were again yoked to drag the wagons to the other side of the river, where there was a sufficiency

of pasturage and of wood to make up their fires.

As it was their intention to remain there for a day or two, the wagons were drawn up at some distance from the river, so as not to interfere with the paths by which the wild animals went down to drink. The spoors or tracks of the lions and buffaloes and other animals were so abundant, as to shew that this precaution was necessary.

As soon as the wagons were arranged in the usual manner, the cattle were permitted to graze till the evening, when they were brought in and secured, as usual, inside and round the wagons. They supped off the remainder of the springbok, which was not very sweet ; but the horses and men were both too much exhausted with the fatiguing journey to hunt until the following day.

That night they were not disturbed by lions, but the hyenas contrived to crawl under

the wagons, and, having severely bitten one of the oxen, succeeded in carrying off one of the sheep. They had been so often annoyed by these animals, that we have never mentioned them; but, on the following morning, it was found that the ox had been so seriously injured that the leg-bone was broken, and they were obliged to destroy the animal.

“Were the courage of the hyena equal to his strength, it would be a most formidable animal,” observed Swinton; “but the fact is, it seldom or ever attacks mankind, although there may be twenty in a troop. At the same time, among the Caffres they very often do enter the huts of the natives, and occasionally devour children and infirm people. But this is greatly owing to the encouragement they receive from the custom of the Caffres leaving their dead to be devoured by these animals, which gives them a liking for human flesh, and makes them more bold to obtain it.”

“They must have a tremendous power in their jaw,” observed Alexander.

“They have, and it is given them for all-wise purposes. The hyena and the vulture are the scavengers of the tropical regions. The hyena devours what the vulture leaves, which is the skin and bones of a dead carcase. Its power of jaw is so great, that it breaks the largest bone with facility.”

“Are there many varieties of them?”

“In Africa there are four :—The common spotted hyena, or wolf of the colonists, whose smell is so offensive that dogs leave it with disgust after it is killed ; its own fellows will, however, devour it immediately. The striped or ferocious hyena, called the shard-wolf ; and another, which the colonists call the baywolf, and which, I believe, to be the one known as the laughing hyena. There is another variety, which is a sort of link between the hyena and the dog, called the venatica. It

hunts in packs, and the colonists term it the wilde honde. It was first classed by Burchell, the traveller. This last is smaller, but much fiercer, than the others."

"I know that there are leopards in the country, but we have never yet fallen in with one. Are they dangerous?"

"The leopard shuns any conflict with man; but when driven to desperation, it becomes a formidable antagonist. I recollect very well two Boors having attacked a leopard, and the animal being hotly pressed by them and wounded, turned round and sprang upon the one nearest, pulling him to the ground, biting his shoulder, and tearing him with his claws. The other, seeing the danger of his comrade, sprang from his horse and attempted to shoot the animal through the head. He missed, and the leopard left the first man, sprang upon *him*, and, striking him on the face, tore his scalp down over his eyes. The hunter

grappled with the animal, and at last they rolled together down a steep cliff. As soon as the first hunter could re-load his gun, he rushed after them to save his friend, but it was too late. The animal had seized him by the throat, and mangled him so dreadfully, that death was inevitable, and all that the man could do was to avenge his comrade's death by shooting the leopard."

"That proves the leopard is not to be trifled with."

"No animal is, when it stands at bay, or is driven to desperation ; and, in confirmation of this, I once witnessed one of these animals—the quaggas—which being pressed to the edge of a precipice by a mounted hunter, seized the man's foot with its teeth, and actually tore it off, so that, although medical aid was at hand, the man died from loss of blood."

"One would hardly expect such a tragical issue to the chase of a wild jackass," observed the Major.

“No ; but ‘in the midst of life we are in death,’ and we never know from whence the blow may come. Until it occurred, such an event was supposed impossible, and the very idea would have created nothing but ridicule. By the bye, one of our good missionaries was very nearly losing his life by a leopard. He went to save a Hottentot who had been seized, and was attacked by the leopard, which, as in the former instance, left his first antagonist to meet his second. Fortunately, Mr. S. was a very powerful man, and assistance was sooner given him than in the former instance. Neither he nor the Hottentot, however, escaped without severe wounds, which confined them for many weeks.”

“Is there more than one variety of leopard, Swinton ?”

“Yes ; there is the common leopard and the hunting leopard ; besides, I think, two or three smaller varieties, as the tiger-cat, and wild

cat. What do you propose doing to-day? Do you stay here, or advance, Wilmot?"

"Why, the Major wishes to have a shot at the gnoos; he has never killed one yet; and as I am of his opinion that a day's rest will recover the oxen, and we are in no hurry, I think we may as well stop and provision our camp for a few days."

"With all my heart. I am sorry that the hyena has added to our store, by obliging us to kill the poor ox; however, it cannot be helped. There is a large body of gnoos and quaggas under that small hill to the westward; but there are better animals for the table, when we get a little further to the northward."

"Which are those?"

"The eland, the largest of the antelope species, and sometimes weighing more than a thousand pounds; moreover, they are very fat, and very easy to run down. They are excellent eating. When I was in the Namaqua's

land, we preferred them to any other food ; but I see another variety of game on the plain there."

"What?"

Omrah pointed them out. "They are either Bushmen (tame Bushmen, as they are called, in contradistinction to the others), or else Korannas; most probably the latter. They are coming right towards us ; but Mahomed says breakfast is ready."

By the time that breakfast was finished, a party of twelve Korannas had joined the caravan. They made signs that they were hungry, pointing to the straps which confined their stomachs. The interpreter told them that they were about to hunt, and that they should have some of the game, at which they were much pleased.

"Do you know what those straps are called round their waist, Wilmot?" said Swinton.

"They are called the belts of famine. All

the natives wear them when hard pressed by hunger, and they say that they are a great relief. I have no doubt but such is the fact."

"Well," said the Major, "I hope soon to enable the poor fellows to loosen their belts, and fill their stomachs till they are as tight as a drum. Saddle the horses, Bremen. Omrah, you ride my spare horse and carry my spare rifle."

Omrah, who now understood English, although he spoke but few words, gave a nod of the head and went off to the wagon for the Major's rifle.

CHAPTER III.

As soon as the horses were ready, our travellers set out in chase of the gnoos and quaggas, which were collected to the westward of the caravan. Bremen, Swanevelt, and Omrah were mounted, and ten of the Hottentots followed with their guns, and the Korannas on foot; among the others, Big Adam, who had been explaining to those who had never seen the gnoos the manner in which he used to kill them.

The herd permitted them to approach within two hundred yards of them, and then, after curveting and prancing, and galloping in small circles, they stood still at about the same distance, looking, with curiosity and

anger mixed, at the horsemen. After a time, they took to their heels and scoured the plain for about two miles, when they again stopped, tossing their heads and manes, and stamping as if in defiance.

The mounted party remained quiet, till those on foot had again drawn near, and the Hottentots, firing their guns, drove the herd within shot of our travellers' guns, and three of the gnoos fell, while the others bounded off to a greater distance; but as they neared the caravan, they again started back, and were again closed in by the whole party.

The Hottentots now advanced cautiously, creeping as near as they could to the animals, whose attention was directed to the horsemen. The Hottentots were nearly within range, when Omrah, who was mounted on the Major's spare horse, fastened to the ramrod of the Major's rifle a red bandanna handkerchief, which he usually wore round his head, and

separating quickly from the rest of the horsemen, walked his horse to where Big Adam was creeping along to gain a shot, and stationed himself behind him, waving the red handkerchief at the animals. Omrah was well aware that a gnool is as much irritated at a red handkerchief as a bull, and as soon as he commenced waving it, one of the largest males stepped out in that direction, pawing the ground, and preparing for a charge.

Big Adam, who had no idea that Omrah was so occupied behind him, now rose to have a shot, and just as he rose, the gnool made his charge, and Big Adam being between the gnool and the horse which Omrah rode, was of course the party against whom the animal's choler was raised.

Omrah, as soon as the animal charged, had wheeled round, and galloped away, while in the meantime Big Adam, perceiving the animal

rushing at him, lost all presence of mind, his gun went off without effect, and he turned tail; the horns of the gnoo were close upon him, when of a sudden, to the surprise of those who were looking on, Big Adam disappeared, and the gnoo passed over where he had been.

“Why, what has become of him?” said Alexander, laughing.

“I don’t know, but I think he has had a wonderful escape,” replied the Major; “he has disappeared like a ghost through a trap-door.”

“But I see his heels,” cried Swinton, laughing; “he has fallen into an ant-eater’s hole, depend upon it; that mischievous little urchin might have caused his death.”

“It was only to make him prove his steady aim which he was boasting so much about,” replied the Major; “but stop a moment; I will bring down that gallant little animal, and then we will look for Big Adam.”

But before the Major could get near enough

to the gnoo, which was still tearing up the ground, and looking for his adversary, Omrah, who had put by the handkerchief, advanced with the Major's rifle, and brought the animal down. A volley was at the same time discharged at the herd by the Hottentots, and three more fell, after which the remainder scampered away and were soon out of sight.

They then rode up to where Big Adam had disappeared, and found him, as Swinton had supposed, in a deep ant-eater's hole, head downwards, and bellowing for help. His feet were just above the surface, and that was all—the Hottentots helped him out, and Big Adam threw himself on his back, and seemed exhausted with fright and having been so long in a reversed position, and was more vexed at the laugh which was raised against him.

The gnoos were soon cut up, and when the Hottentots had taken away as much as they required, the rest of the carcasses were made

over to the hungry Korannas. Swinton shook his head at Omrah, who pretended that he did not understand why, until the laughter of Alexander and the Major was joined in by Swinton himself.

As they had pretty well fatigued their horses in the chase, they resolved to return to the caravan, and keep them as fresh as they could for future service. They dined and supped on the flesh of the gnoos, which was approved of, and after supper Alexander said —“And now, Swinton, if you feel inclined, the Major and I will be very glad to hear your history of the Mantatees.”

“With pleasure,” replied Swinton. “The assemblage of tribes, known as the Mantatees or Invaders, according to the best authorities we can collect, inhabited the countries to the westward of the Zoolu territory, in the same latitude, which is that of Delagoa Bay. As all these tribes subsist almost entirely upon the

flesh and the milk of their cattle, if deprived of them they are driven to desperation, and must either become robbers in their turn, or perish by hunger. Such was the case of the Mantatees. Unable to withstand the attacks of the Zoolus, they were driven from their country and joined their forces with others who had shared the same fate.

“Such was the origin of the Mantatees, who, although they had not courage to withstand the attacks of the Zoolus, were stimulated by desperation and famine to a most extraordinary courage in the attacks which they made upon others.

“Forming an immense body, now that they were collected together, accompanied by their wives and children, and unable to procure the necessary subsistence, it is certain that their habits were so far changed that they at last became cannibals, and were driven to prey upon the dead bodies of their enemies, or

the flesh of their comrades who fell in the combats.

“The Bechuana tribes, who are the Caffres of the interior, were the first assailed, their towns sacked and burnt, and their cattle seized and devoured. They proceeded on to the Wankeets, one of the Damara tribes, who inhabit the western coast, to the northward of the Namaqua land ; but the Wankeets were a brave people, and prepared for them, and the Mantatees were driven back with great slaughter. Astounded at their defeat, they turned to the southward, and invaded the Bechuana country.

“At that time our missionaries had established themselves at Koranna, and when the report of the Mantatees advancing was brought to them, the Bechuanas were in a great consternation ; for although finer-looking men than the eastern Caffres, they are not by any means so brave and warlike.

“As the advance of these people would have been the ruin of the mission as well as the destruction of the tribe who were afraid to encounter them, Mr. M., the missionary, determined upon sending for the assistance of the Griquas, the people whom I have before mentioned, and who had not only horses, but were well armed. The Griquas came under their chief, Waterboer, and marched against the enemy, accompanied by a large army of Bechuanas, who, encouraged by the presence of the Griquas, now went forth to the combat.

“The Mantatees had at that time advanced as far, and had taken possession of, Litakoo, a Bechuana town, containing 16,000 inhabitants; and I will now give, as nearly as I can recollect it, the account of Mr. M., the missionary at Kuruman, who accompanied the Griquas to propose and effect, if it were possible, an amicable arrangement with the invaders.

“He told me that as they proceeded with a

small party, a-head of the Griqua force, to effect their purpose, they passed by numbers of the enemy, who had advanced to the pools to drink, and had there sunk down and expired from famine. As they neared the mass of the enemy, they found that all the cattle which they had captured were inclosed in the centre of a vast multitude. They attempted a parley, but the enemy started forward and hurled their spears with the most savage fury, and they were compelled to retreat, finding no hopes of obtaining a parley.

“The next day it was decided that the Griquas should advance. They numbered about one hundred well-mounted and well-armed men. The enemy flew at them with terrible howls, hurling their javelins and clubs ; their black dismal appearance, their savage fury, and their hoarse loud voices, producing a strange effect. The Griquas, to prevent their being surrounded, very wisely retreated.

“It was at last decided that the Griquas should fire, and it was hoped that as the Mantatees had never seen the effects of fire-arms, they would be humbled and alarmed, and thus further bloodshed might be prevented. Many of the Mantatees fell; but although the survivors looked with astonishment upon the dead, and their wounded warriors writhing in the dust, they flew with lion-like vengeance at the horsemen, wrenching the weapons from the hands of their dying companions, to replace those which they had already discharged at their antagonists.

“As those who thus stepped out from the main body to attack the Griquas, were the chiefs of the Mantatees, and many of them were killed, their deaths, one after the other, disheartened the whole body.

“After the Griquas had commenced the attack, the Bechuana army came up and assisted with their poisoned arrows, with which they

plied the enemy; but a small body of the fierce Mantatees sallying out, put the whole of the Bechuanas to flight.

“After a combat of two hours and a half, the Griquas, finding their ammunition failing, determined, at a great risk, to charge the whole body. They did so, and the Mantatees gave way, and fled in a westerly direction; but they were intercepted by the Griquas, and another charge being made, the whole was pell-mell and confusion.

“Mr. M. says that the scene which now presented itself was most awful, and the state of suspense most cruel. The undulating country around was covered with warriors—Griquas, Mantatees, and Bechuanas, all in motion—so that it was impossible to say who were enemies and who were friends. Clouds of dust rose from the immense masses, some flying, others pursuing; and to their screams and yells were added the bellowing of the oxen, the shouts of the yet

unvanquished warriors, the groans of the dying, and the wails of women and of children. At last the enemy retreated to the town, which they set in flames, to add to the horror of the scene.

“ Then another desperate struggle ensued ; the Mantatees attempted to inclose the Griquas in the burning town, but not succeeding, they fled precipitately. Strange to say, the Mantatee forces were divided into two parts, and during the time that the Griquas engaged the one, the other remained in the town, having such confidence in the former, that they did not come to their assistance.

“ When the town was set on fire, both armies united, and retreated together to the northward, in a body of not less than 40,000 warriors. As soon as the Mantatees retreated, the Bechuanas commenced the work of slaughter. Women and children were butchered without mercy ; but as for the wounded Mantatees, it

appeared as if nothing would make them yield. There were many instances of an individual being surrounded by fifty Bechuanas, but as long as life remained he fought.

“ Mr. M. says that he saw more than one instance of a Mantatee fighting wildly against numbers with ten or twelve arrows and spears pierced in his body. Struggling with death, the men would rally, raise themselves from the ground, discharge their weapons, and fall dead, their revengeful and hostile spirit only ceasing when life was extinct.”

“ And yet these same people permitted their own country to be taken from them by the Zoolus.”

“ Yes, it was so ; but want and necessity had turned them into desperate warriors.”

“ I wonder they never thought of going back and recovering their own country. They would have been a match for the Zoolus. Is that the end of their history, Swinton ?”

“No, not quite. But perhaps you are tired?”

“Oh, no. Pray go on.”

“The Mantatees, although defeated by the Griquas, soon recovered their courage, and intelligence came that they were about to make a descent upon Kuruman, where the missionaries had their station. The Mantatees having been informed that the Griquas had gone home, now determined to revenge themselves upon the Bechuanas, whom they considered but as the dust under their feet.

“On this information, Mr. M. wrote to Waterboer, who commanded the Griquas, requesting his immediate return; but Waterboer replied that an immense body of Mantatees were coming down upon the Griquas by the Val or Yellow River, and that they were forced to remain, to defend their own property, advising Mr. M. to retreat with his family to the Griqua town, and put themselves under their protection.

“As they could no longer remain, the mission

station was abandoned, and the missionaries, with their wives and families, retreated to Griqua town. They had not, however, been long at Griqua town before news arrived that both the bodies of Mantatees had altered their routes. One portion of them went eastward, towards the country from which they had been driven by the Zoolus, and another, it appears, took possession of the country near the sources of the Orange River, where for many years they carried on a predatory warfare with the tribes in that district. At last a portion of them were incorporated, and settled down on that part which is now known as the Mantatee new country; the remainder made an irruption into the Eastern Caffre country, where they were known as the Ficani."

"And what became of them?"

"They defeated one or two of the Caffre chiefs, and the Caffres implored the assistance of the English colonists, which was granted,

and a large armed force was sent out against the invaders. They were found located, for they had built a town near the sources of the Umtata River. The Caffres joined with all their forces, and the Ficani were surprised. A horrid slaughter took place; muskets, artillery, and congreve rockets were poured upon the unfortunate wretches, who were hemmed in on all sides by the Caffres, and the unfortunate Ficani may be said to have been exterminated, for the Caffres spared neither man, woman, or child. Such is the history of the Mantatees; their destruction was horrible, but perhaps unavoidable."

"Very true," observed Alexander; "I cannot help thinking that desolating contests like these, are permitted by a controlling Providence, as chastisements, yet with a gracious end; for, surely it was better that they should meet with immediate death than linger till famine put an end to their misery. This is

certain, that they must have been destroyed, or others destroyed to make room for them. In either case a great sacrifice of life was to be incurred. War, dreadful as it is in detail, appears to be one of the necessary evils of human existence, and a means by which we do not increase so rapidly as to devour each other.

“ I don't know whether you have made the observation, but it appears to me the plague and cholera are almost necessary in the countries where they break out; and it is very remarkable that the latter disease never made its appearance in Europe (at least not for centuries, I may say) until after peace had been established, and the increase of population was so rapid.

“ During the many years that Europe was devastated and the population thinned by war, we had no cholera, and but little of one or two other epidemics which have since been very fatal. What I mean to infer is, that the hand of

Providence may be seen in all this. Thus sanguinary wars, and the desolating ravages of disease, which are in themselves afflictive visitations, and, probably, chastisements for national sins, may, nevertheless, have the effect, in some cases, of preventing the miseries which result from an undue increase of population."

"You may be quite right, Alexander," observed Swinton; "the ways of Heaven are inscrutably mysterious, and when we offer up prayers for the removal of what may appear to be a heavy calamity, we may be deprecating that which in the end may prove a mercy."

"One thing I could not help remarking in your narrative, Swinton," observed the Major, "which is the position of the missionaries during this scene of terror. You passed it slightly over, but it must have been most trying."

"Most surely it was."

"And yet I have not only read but heard

much said against them, and strong opposition made to subscriptions for their support."

"I grant it, but it is because people know that a great deal of money has been subscribed and do not know the uses to which it is applied. They hear Reports read, and find perhaps that the light of the Gospel has but as yet glimmered in one place or another; that in other places, all labour has hitherto been thrown away. They forget that it is the grain of mustard-seed which is to become a great tree and spread its branches—they wish for immoderate returns, and are therefore disappointed. Of course I cannot give an opinion as to the manner in which the missions are conducted in other countries, but as I have visited most of the missions in these parts, I can honestly assert, and I think you have already yourselves seen enough to agree with me, that the money intrusted to the societies is not thrown away or lavishly expended; the missionaries

labour with their own hands, and almost provide for their own support."

"There I agree with you, Swinton," replied Alexander, "but what are the objections raised against them? for now that I have seen them with my own eyes, I cannot imagine what they can be."

"The objections which I have heard and have so often attempted to refute are, that the generality of missionaries are a fanatical class of men, who are more anxious to inculcate the peculiar tenets of their own sects and denominations than the religion of our Saviour—that most of them are uneducated and vulgar men—many of them very intemperate and very injudicious—some few of them of bad moral character, and that their exertions, if they have used them—whether to civilize or to Christianize the people among whom they are sent—have not been followed by any commensurate results."

“And now let us have your replies to these many objections.”

“It is no doubt true that the missionaries who are labouring among the savages of the interior are, many if not most of them, people of limited education. Indeed, the major portion of them have been brought up as mechanics. But I much question whether men of higher attainments and more cultivated minds would be better adapted to meet the capacities of unintellectual barbarians. A highly educated man may be appreciated among those who are educated themselves; but how can he be appreciated by the savage? On the contrary, the savage looks with much more respect upon a man who can forge iron, repair his weapons, and excite his astonishment by his cunning workmanship; for, then the savage perceives and acknowledges his superiority, which in the man of intellect he would never discover.

“Besides, admitting that it would be prefer-

able to employ persons of higher mental attainments, where are they to be found? Could you expect, when so many labourers are required in the vineyard, a sufficient number of volunteers among the young men brought up at the universities? Would they be able to submit to those privations, and incur those hardships to which the African missionaries are exposed? Would they be able to work hard, and labour for their daily bread; or be willing to encounter such toil and such danger as must be encountered by those who are sent here? I fear not. And allow me here to remark, that at the first preaching of Christianity it was not talented and educated men who were selected by our Saviour; out of the twelve, the Apostle Paul was the only one who had such claims.

“If we had beheld the Galilean fishermen mending their nets, should we have ever imagined that those humble labourers were to be the people who should afterwards regenerate

the world ?—should overthrow the idolatries and crumble the superstitions of ancient empires and kingdoms ?—and that what they,—uneducated, but, we admit, divinely inspired and supported,—had taught, should be joyfully received, as it is now, we may say, from the rising to the setting of the sun, to the utmost boundaries of the earth?”

“ Most truly and most admirably argued, Swinton,” replied Alexander. “ The Almighty, as if to prove how insignificant in his sight is all human power, has often made use of the meanest instruments to accomplish the greatest ends. Who knows but that even our keeping holy the Sabbath-day in the desert may be productive of some good, and be the humble means of advancing the Divine cause ? We must ever bear in mind the counsel, ‘ In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or

that, or whether they both shall be alike good.' ”

“ Surely so,” replied Swinton ; “ the natives consider us as a superior race ; they see our worship, and they are led to think that must be right which they perceive is done by those to whom they look up as their superiors. It may induce them to inquire and to receive information—eventually to be enrolled among the followers of our Saviour. It is, however, not to be denied that in some few instances persons have been chosen for the office of missionaries who have proved themselves unworthy ; but that must and will ever be the case where human agents are employed. But it argues no more against the general respectability and utility of the missionaries as a body, than the admission of the traitor Judas amongst the apostles. To the efficacy of their works, and their zeal in the cause, I myself, having visited the stations, have no

hesitation in bearing testimony. Indeed I cannot but admire the exemplary fortitude, the wonderful patience and perseverance which the missionaries have displayed.

“These devoted men are to be found in the remotest deserts, accompanying the wild and wandering savages from place to place, suffering from hunger and from thirst, destitute of almost every comfort, and at times without even the necessities of life. Some of them have without murmuring spent their whole lives in such service; and yet their zeal is set down as fanaticism by those who remain at home, and assert that the money raised for their equipment is thrown away. Happily, they have not looked for their reward in this world, but have built their hopes upon that which is to come.”

“That the people who joined the mission stations have become more civilized, and that they are very superior to their countrymen, is

certain," observed the Major; "but have you seen any proof of Christianity having produced any remarkably good effect among the natives? —I mean one that might be brought forward as convincing evidence to those who have shewn themselves inimical or lukewarm in the cause."

"Yes," replied Swinton, "the history of Africaner is one; and there are others, although not so prominent as that of the party to whom I refer."

"Well, Swinton, you must now be again taxed. You must give us the history of Africaner."

"That I will, with pleasure, that you may be able to narrate it, when required, in support of the missions. Africaner was a chief, and a descendant of chiefs of the Hottentot nation, who once pastured their own flocks and herds on their own native hills, within a hundred miles of Cape Town. As the Dutch colonists at the Cape increased, so did they, as Mr. Fair-

burn has stated to Alexander, dispossess the Hottentots of their lands, and the Hottentots, unable to oppose their invaders, gradually found themselves more and more remote from the possessions of their forefathers.

“ After a time, Africaner and his diminished clan found themselves compelled to join and take service under a Dutch boor, and for some time proved himself a most faithful shepherd in looking after and securing the herds of his employer. Had the Dutch boor behaved with common humanity, not to say gratitude, towards those who served him so well, he might now have been alive; but, like all the rest of his countrymen, he considered the Hottentots as mere beasts of burden, and at any momentary anger, they were murdered and hunted down as if they were wild animals.

“ Africaner saw his clan daily diminished by the barbarity of his feudal master, and at last resolved upon no further submission. As the

Bushmen were continually making attempts upon the cattle of the boor, Africaner and his people had not only been well trained to fire-arms, but had them constantly in their possession. His assumed master having an idea that there would be a revolt, resolved upon sending a portion of Africaner's people to a distant spot, where he intended to secure them, and by their destruction weaken the power of the clan.

“ This, as he was a sort of magistrate, he had the power to enforce ; but Africaner, suspecting his views, resolved to defeat them. Order after order was sent to the huts of Africaner and his people. They positively refused to comply. They requested to be paid for their long services, and be permitted to retire further into the interior. This was sternly denied, and they were ordered to appear at the house of the boor. Fearful of violence, yet accustomed to obey his order,

Africaner and his brothers went up ; but one of his brothers concealed his gun under his cloak. On their arrival, the boor came out and felled Africaner to the ground. His brother immediately shot the boor with his gun, and thus did the miscreant meet with the just reward of his villainies and murders.

“ The wife, who had witnessed the murder of her husband, shrieked and implored mercy ; they told her that she need not be alarmed, but requested that the guns and ammunition in the house should be delivered up to them, which was immediately done. Africaner then hastened back to his people, collected them, and all his cattle, with what effects they could take with them, and directed his course to the Orange River.

“ He was soon out of the reach of his pursuers, for it required time in so scattered a district to collect a sufficient force. Africaner fixed his abode upon the banks of the Orange River,

and afterwards a chief ceding to him his dominion in Great Namaqua Land, the territory became his by right as well as by conquest. I think I had better leave off now—it is getting late, and we must to bed, if we are to start early to-morrow morning.”

“ We will have mercy upon you, Swinton, and defer our impatience,” said the Major.—“ Good night to you, and may you not have a lion’s serenade.”

“ No, I hope not ; their music is too loud to be agreeable ;—good night.”

CHAPTER IV.

HAVING filled their water-kegs, the next morning at daylight they yoked the oxen, and left the banks of the Cradock or Black River, to proceed more to the northward, through the Bushman's country ; but as they were aware that there was no water to be procured if they quitted the stream altogether, till they arrived at the Vaal or Yellow River, they decided upon following the course of the Black River to the westward for some time

before they struck off for the Vaal or Yellow River, near to which they expected to fall in with plenty of game, and particularly the giraffe and rhinoceros.

Although at that season of the year the river was nearly dry, still there was a scanty herbage on and near its bank, intermixed with beds of rushes and high reeds; this was sufficient for the pasture of the cattle, but it was infested with lions and other animals, which at the dry season of the year kept near the river-bank for a supply of water.

By noon they had proceeded about fifteen miles to the westward, and as they advanced they found that the supply of water in the river was more abundant: they then unyoked the cattle to allow them to feed till the evening, for it was too dangerous to turn them loose at night. As they were in no hurry, they resolved that they would only travel for the future from daylight till

noon; the afternoon and evening were to be spent in hunting, and at night they were to halt the caravan and secure every thing as before, by inclosing the horses and sheep, and tying up the oxen.

By this arrangement the cattle would not be exhausted with their labour, and they would have time to follow the object of their journey, that of hunting the wild animals with which the country abounded, and also of procuring a constant supply of food for themselves and their attendants.

Having now travelled as far as they wished, they stopped at the foot of a rising ground, about a quarter of a mile from the river's bank, and which was on the outskirts of a large clump of mimosa and other trees. As soon as the cattle were unyoked and had gone down to the river to drink, our travellers ordered their horses to be saddled, and as the banks of the river on that side were low,

they rode up to the rising ground to view the country beyond, and ascertain what game might be in sight.

When they arrived at the summit, and were threading their way through the trees, Omrah pointed to a broken branch, and said, "Elephant here not long go."

Bremen said that Omrah was right, and that the animals could not have left more than a week, and that probably they had followed the course of the stream. The print of another foot was observed by Omrah, and he pointed it out; but not knowing the name to give the animal in English or Dutch, he imitated its motions.

"Does he mean a gnoo?" said Alexander.

Omrah shook his head, and raising his hands up, motioned that the animal was twice as big.

"Come here, Bremen, what print of a hoof is this?" said Swinton.

“Buffalo, Sir,—fresh print—was here last night.”

“That’s an animal that I am anxious to slay,” said the Major.

“You must be very careful that he does not slay *you*,” replied Swinton; “for it is a most dangerous beast, almost as much so as a lion.”

“Well, we must not return without one, at all events,” said Alexander; “nor without a lion also, as soon as we can find one alone; but those we have seen in the daytime have always been in threes and fours, and I think the odds too great with our party; but the first single lion we fall in with, I vote we try for his skin.”

“Agreed,” replied the Major; “what do you say, Swinton?”

“Why I say agreed also; but as I came here to look for other things rather than lions, I should say, as far as I am concerned, that

the best part of valour would be discretion. However, depend upon it, if you go after a lion I shall be with you : I have often been at the destruction of them when with Dutch boors ; but then recollect we have no horses to spare, and therefore we must not exactly follow their method."

" How do they hunt the lions then ? " inquired Alexander.

" They hunt them more for self-defence than for pleasure," replied Swinton ; " but on the outskirts of the colony the lions are so destructive to the herds that the colonists must destroy them. They generally go out ten or twelve of them, with their long guns, not fewer if possible ; and you must recollect that these boors are not only very cool, brave men, but most excellent shots. I fear you will not find that number among our present party, as, with the exception of our three selves, and Bremen and Swanevelt, I do not believe that there is

one man here who would face a lion ; so that when we do attack one, it will be at a disadvantage.

“The Dutch Boors, as soon as they have ascertained where the lion lies, approach the bushes to within a moderate distance, and then alighting, they make all their horses fast together with their bridles and halters. In this there is danger, as sometimes the lion will spring out upon them at once, and if so, probably not only horses but men are sacrificed. If the lion remains quiet, which is usually the case, they advance towards him within thirty paces or thereabouts, as they know that he generally makes his spring at half that distance ; but as they advance, they back their horses towards him, as a shield in front of them, knowing that the lion will spring upon the horses.

“As they move forward, the lion at first looks at them very calmly, and very often wags his tail as if in a playful humour ; but when they

approach nearer, he growls, as if to warn them off. Then, as they continue to approach, he gradually draws up his hind legs under his body, ready for a spring at them as soon as they are within distance, and you see nothing of him except his bristling mane, and his eyes glaring like fire; for he is then fully enraged, and in the act of springing the next moment.

“This is the critical moment, and the signal is given for half the party to fire. If they are not successful in laying him dead on the spot with this first volley, he springs like a thunderbolt upon the horses. The remainder of the party then fire, and seldom fail to put an end to him; but generally one or more of the horses are either killed or so wounded as to be destroyed in consequence; and sometimes, although rarely, one or more of the hunters share the same fate. So, you observe that, with every advantage, it is a service of danger, and

therefore should not be undertaken without due precaution."

"Very true, Swinton; but it will never do to return to the Cape without having killed a lion."

"As you please; but even that would be better than being killed yourself by a lion, and not returning at all. However, my opinion is that you will have to kill a lion before you have travelled much further, without going in quest of him. There are hundreds of them here; as many as there are in Namaqua Land."

"Look, master!" said Bremen, pointing to seven or eight splendid antelopes about a mile distant.

"I see," replied the Major. "What are they?"

"Gemsbok," said Swinton. "Now I will thank you for a specimen of that beautiful creature, if you can get it for me. We must dismount, leave our horses here, and crawl

along from tree to tree, and bush to bush, till we get within shot."

"They are, indeed, noble animals. Look at that large male, which appears to be the leader and master of the herd. What splendid horns!" cried Alexander.

"Give the horses to Omrah and Swanevelt. Bremen shall go with us. Hist; not a word; they are looking in this direction," said the Major.

"Recollect to try for the large male. I want him most particularly," said Swinton.

"Master," said Bremen, "we must creep till we get those bushes between us and the game. Then we can crawl through the bushes and get a good shot."

"Yes, that will be the best plan," said Swinton. "As softly as we can, for they are very shy animals."

They followed one another for two or three hundred yards, creeping from one covert to

another, till they had placed the bushes on the plain between them and the herd. They then stopped a little and reconnoitred. The herd of antelopes had left off feeding, and now had all their heads turned towards the bushes, and in the direction where they were concealed ; the large male rather in advance of the others, with his long horns pointing forward, and his nose close to the ground. Our party kept silence for some time, watching the animals ; but none of them moved much from their positions ; and as for the male, he remained as if he were a statue.

“ They must have scented us,” whispered Alexander.

“ No, Sir,” said Bremen, “ the wind blows from them to us. I can’t think what they are about. But perhaps they may have seen us.”

“ At all events, we shall gain nothing by remaining here ; we shall be more concealed as we descend and approach them,” observed the Major.

“That is true ; so come along. Creep like mice,” said Swinton.

They did so, and at last arrived at the patch of brushwood which was between them and the antelopes, and were now peeping and creeping to find out an opening to fire through, when they heard a rustling within. Bremen touched the sleeve of the Major and beckoned a retreat, and motioned to the others ; but before they could decide, as they did not know why the Hottentot proposed it, for he did not speak himself, and put his hand to his mouth as a hint to them to be silent, a roar like thunder came from the bushes within three yards of them, accompanied with a rushing noise which could not be mistaken. It was the roar and spring of a lion ; and they looked round amazed and stunned, to ascertain who was the victim.

“Merciful Heaven !” exclaimed Alexander, “and no one hurt !”

“No, master ; lion spring at antelope. Now

we shall find him on other side of the bush, and kill him easy, when his eyes are shut."

Bremen led the way round the copse, followed by our travellers; they soon arrived on the other side of it, with their guns all ready; but on their arrival, to their astonishment, they perceived the lion and the male gemsbok lying together. The antelope was dead, but the lion still alive; though the horns of the gemsbok had passed through his body. At the sight of the hunters, the lion, pierced through as he was, raised his head with a loud roar, and struck out with his paw, as he twisted towards them, his eyes glaring like hot coals, and shewing his tremendous fangs. Alexander was the first who fired, and the ball penetrating the brain of the noble animal, it fell down dead upon the body of the antelope.

"This is the finest sight I ever witnessed," observed Swinton. "I have heard that the gemsboks' horns are sometimes fatal to the

lion, but I could hardly credit it. They have passed nearly through his body ; the points are under the skin."

"Now we know, Master, why gemsbok have his nose to the ground and his horn pointed," said Bremen ; "he saw the lion and fought him to save his herd."

"I am quite stunned yet," observed Alexander. "What a noble animal it is. Well, at all events, I can say that I have shot a lion, which is more than you can, Major."

"I only wish that when I shoot one I may have no more danger to incur," replied the Major. "What a different idea does one have of a lion in a menagerie and one in its free and native state. Why, the menagerie lions can't roar at all ; they are nothing but overgrown cats, compared to the lion of the desert."

"That is very true," observed Swinton ; "however, I am delighted, for now I have not only my gemsbok, which is a gem above price,

but also as fine a lion as I have ever seen. I should like to have them stuffed and set up just as they were before Alexander killed them. His rage and agony combined were most magnificent. After all, the lion is the king of the beasts. Bremen, send Swanevelt to the caravan for some of the men. I must have both skin and skeleton of the antelope, and the skin of the lion."

Our travellers were quite satisfied with the sport of the day, and, after waiting for some time, while the Hottentots disentangled the animals and took off the skins, they returned to the caravan, Omrah having secured a portion of the flesh of the gemsbok for their supper.

As they were returning, they observed a herd of buffaloes at a great distance, and proposed to themselves the hunting of them after they had halted on the following day, if the animals were at any reasonable distance from

them. At supper the flesh of the antelope was pronounced better than that of the gnoo ; and after supper, as soon as the cattle had been all secured and the fires lighted, Alexander proposed that Swinton should finish his history of Africaner.

“If I remember right, I left off where Africaner and his people had escaped to Namaqua Land, where he became a chief. Attempts were made to take him prisoner and bring him to the colony, but without success. Expedition after expedition failed, and Africaner dared them to approach his territories. At last, the colonists had recourse to the Griquas, and offered them large rewards if they would bring Africaner in.

“The Griquas, commanded by a celebrated chief, of the name of Berend, made several attempts, and in consequence a cruel war was carried on between Berend and Africaner, in which neither party gained the advantage.

Africaner discovering that the colonists had bribed Berend to make war against him, now turned his wrath against them. A Dutch boor fell a victim to his fury, and he carried off large quantities of their cattle, and eventually Africaner became the terror of the colony. The natives also who resided in Namaqua Land commenced depredations upon Africaner, but he repaid them with such interest, that at last every tribe fled at his approach, and his name carried dismay into their solitary wastes. The courage and intrepidity shewn by Africaner and his brothers in their various combats, were most remarkable, but to narrate all his adventures would occupy too much time. It is certain that he not only became dreaded, but in consequence of his forbearance on several occasions he was respected.

“It was in 1810 that the missionaries came into the Namaqua Land, and it unfortunately happened that a dispute arose about some of

Africaner's property, which was seized, and at the same time Africaner lost some cattle. The parties who were at variance with Africaner lived near to the mission station, and very unwisely the people at the mission station were permitted to go to their assistance.

“This roused the anger of Africaner, who vowed vengeance on the mission and the people collected around it or connected with it. As Africaner had commenced his attacks upon the Namaquas, and was advancing towards the mission, the missionaries were compelled to abandon the station and return to the colony. The mission station was soon afterwards taken possession of by Africaner, and the houses burnt to the ground.

“A curious circumstance occurred during this affair: his followers were seeking everywhere for plunder, when some of them entered the burial-ground, and one of them treading on an apparently new-made grave, was aston-

ished by soft notes of music proceeding from the ground beneath.

“Superstitious as the natives are, and having most of them, in former days, heard something of the Christian doctrines, they started and stood transfixed with astonishment, expecting the dead to arise, as they had been once told. One of them mustered courage to put his foot again upon the spot, and the reply was soft and musical as before. Away they all started to Africaner, to inform him that there was life and music in the grave.

“The chief, who feared neither the living nor the dead, went to the burial-ground with his men, and jumped upon the spot, which immediately gave out the soft notes as before. Africaner ordered an immediate exhumation, when the source of the mystery proved to be the pianoforte of the missionary’s wife, which, being too cumbrous an article to take away, had been buried there, with the hope of being

one day able to recover it. Never having seen such an instrument before, Africaner had it dissected for the sake of the brass wires, and thus the piano was destroyed."

"I doubt if it would ever have been dug up in Caffre Land," observed Alexander.

"I am convinced it never would have been, but have remained as a wonder and object of fear as long as it held together," replied Swinton; "but to proceed—

"The mission station having been for some time broken up by this attack of Africaner, Mr. C., a missionary, anxious to restore it, wrote a letter to Africaner on the subject, and received a favourable reply, and a Mr. E. was sent to the residence of Africaner himself. After a short time, Africaner and his two brothers, with a number of others, were baptized.

"At first it must be admitted that their profession of Christianity did not greatly improve their conduct; but this was very much to

be ascribed to the circumstance, that the duties of the station had devolved upon one who ought not to have been selected for the task. Upon his removal, and a more fitting minister of the Gospel taking his place, a great change was soon observable in Africamer; and, from having been one of the most remorseless pursuers of his vengeance—a firebrand spreading discord, war, and animosity among the neighbouring tribes—he would now make every concession and any sacrifice to prevent collision and bloodshed between contending parties.

“Although his power was so great that he might have raised his arm and dared them to lift a spear or draw a bow, he would entreat them as a suppliant to be reconciled.

“‘Look at me,’ he would say, ‘how many battles have I fought; how much cattle have I taken; but what has it done for me, but make me full of shame and sorrow?’

“In short, from that time till he died, he

became a peacemaker and a Christian, both in word and deed. His whole life was devoted to acts of kindness and charity—to instructing and exhorting, and following the precepts of Him in whose faith eventually he lived and died.”

“Well, Swinton, you have indeed given us a remarkable proof that the missionary labours are not always thrown away, and we thank you for your compliance with our request.”

“It is a remarkable instance, if you only consider how many hundreds of lives might have been sacrificed, if Africaner had continued his career of slaughter and of plunder; and how many lives, I may add, have been also saved by his interference as a peacemaker, instead of being, as he formerly was, a promoter of war and bloodshed.”

“Swinton,” said Alexander, “I wanted to ask you a question which I had nearly forgotten. Do you recollect what Bremen said to us, that the lion had seized the gemsbok, and

that now the lion would shut his eyes, and that he would shoot him?"

"Yes, I do; and he was correct in what he stated, for I have witnessed it myself. When a lion seizes a large animal like an ox or horse, or the animal he fell a martyr to this afternoon, he springs upon it, seizes it by the throat with his terrible fangs, and holds it down with his paws till it expires. From the moment the lion seizes his prey, he shuts his eyes, and never opens them again until the life of his prey is extinct. I remember a Hottentot, when a lion had seized an ox in this way, running up to him with his gun and firing within a few yards' distance. The lion, however, did not deign to notice the report of the gun, but continued to hold fast his prey. The Hottentot loaded again, fired, and again missed; reloaded again, and then shot the lion through the head."

"How very strange!"

“It is, and I cannot give any reason for it; but that it is so, I well know to be a fact. Perhaps it may be that the animal, after long fasting, is quite absorbed with the grateful taste of the blood flowing into his mouth, while the animal is writhing under his clutches. But there are many singular points about the lion, which is a much more noble and intelligent animal than most people have any idea of; I have collected a number of facts relative to his majesty which would surprise you. The Bushmen know the animal and his habits so well, that they seldom come to any accident from their inhabiting a country in which I really believe the population of lions exceeds that of Bushmen.”

“Is it true that the lion, as well as other animals, is afraid of the eye of man?” said the Major; “can you reply to that question?”

“Yes, I can,” answered Swinton; “I was about to say that he is and is not; but a better

answer will be to give you what has come to my knowledge: I consider that the lion is a much more dangerous animal in this country, and indeed in any other where there are no firearms, than where the occupants are possessed of them.

“It may appear strange, but it is my fixed opinion, that the lion has an idea of the deadly nature of firearms, and that he becomes in consequence more afraid of man. You remember a story I told you of a lion watching a man for two days without destroying him, but never permitting him to lay hold of his gun; now it is satisfactorily proved that a lion will pass a man who has a gun in his hand without attacking him, provided that he does not attempt to level the gun; but the moment that he does he will spring upon him.

“An instance of that occurred to the great lion hunter, Diedrich Muller, who mentioned it to me. He had been alone hunting in the

wilds, when he came suddenly upon a large lion, which, instead of giving way as they usually do, seemed disposed, from the angry attitude which he assumed, to dispute his progress.

“Muller instantly alighted, and, confident of his unerring aim, levelled his gun at the forehead of the lion, which had crouched in the act to spring, within sixteen paces of him ; but as he fired, his horse, whose bridle was round his arm, started back, and jerking him aside, caused him to miss ; the lion bounded forward, but stopped within a few paces, confronting Muller, who stood defenceless, as his gun was discharged and his horse had galloped off.

“The man and the beast stood looking each other in the face for a short time. At length the lion moved backward, as if to go away. Muller began loading his gun ; the lion looked over his shoulder, growled, and immediately returned to his former position within a few

paces of Muller. Muller stood still, with his eyes fixed on the animal. The lion again moved cautiously off; when he was at a certain distance, Muller proceeded to ram down his bullet. The lion again looked back and growled angrily. Muller again was quiet, and the animal continued turning and growling as it moved off, till at last it bounded away."

"You imagine, then, that the lion is aware of the fatal effects of firearms?" said the Major.

"It would appear so, not only on account of their being so angry if presented at them, or being touched even when they are close to them, but also from the greater respect the lion pays to man where firearms are in use. The respect that he pays to men in the colony is not a general custom of the animal.

"As I said before, the lion is more dangerous in this Bushman country; because, in the

first place, his awe of man has been removed, from his invariably successful rencontres with those who have no weapons of force with which to oppose him; and, secondly, because he has but too often tasted human flesh, after which a lion becomes more partial to it than any other food.

“It is asserted, that when a lion has once succeeded in snatching some unfortunate Bushman from his cave, he never fails to return regularly every night, in hopes of another meal, until the horde is so harassed that they are compelled to seek some other shelter. From apprehension of such attacks, it is also asserted that the Bushmen are in the habit of placing their aged and infirm people at the entrance of the cave during the night, that, should the lion come, the least valuable and most useless of their community may first fall a prey to the animal.”

“Of course, if permitted to help himself

in that way, the lion cannot have much fear of man," observed Wilmot; "and his lurking abroad in the night takes away much from the nobleness of disposition which you are inclined to attribute to him."

"By no means," continued Swinton. "That a lion generally lurks and lies in wait to seize his prey, is certain; but this is the general characteristic of the feline tribe, of which he may be considered as the head; and it is for this mode of hunting that nature has fitted him.

"The wolf, the hound, and others, are furnished with an acute scent, and are enabled to tire down their prey by a long chase. The feline tribe are capable of very extraordinary efforts of activity and speed for a very short time; if they fail to seize their prey at the first spring, or after a few tremendous bounds, they generally abandon the pursuit.

"The lion can spring from nine to twelve yards at a leap, and for a few seconds can

repeat these bounds with such activity and velocity, as to outstrip the movements of the quickest horse ; but he cannot continue these amazing efforts, and does not attempt it. In fact, the lion is no more than a gigantic cat, and he must live by obtaining his prey in the same manner as a cat.

“ In these countries, his prey is chiefly of the antelope species, the swiftest animals on earth ; and what chance would he have, if he were to give one of his magnanimous roars to announce his approach ? He knows his business better ; he crouches in the rank grass and reeds by the sides of the paths made by the animals to descend to the rivers and pools to drink, and as they pass he makes his spring upon them.

“ Now I do not consider that his obtaining his food as nature has pointed out to him, is any argument against what I consider the really noble disposition of the lion, which is, that he

does not kill for mere cruelty, and that he is really generous, unless compelled by hunger to destroy, as I have already shewn by one or two examples."

"We are convinced, my dear Swinton," said Alexander; "but now let us have your opinion as to his being afraid to meet the eye of man."

"I consider that the lion will generally retreat before the presence of man; but he does not retreat cowardly like the leopard or hyena, and others. He never slinks away, he appears calmly to survey his opponent, as apparently measuring his prowess. I should say that the lion seems to have a secret impression that man is not his natural prey, and although he will not always give place to him, he will not attack him, if, in the first place, the man shews no signs of fear, and in the second, no signs of hostility.

"But this instinctive deference to man is

not to be reckoned upon. He may be very angry, he may be very hungry, he may have been just disappointed in taking his prey, or he may be accompanied by the female and cubs; in short, the animal's temper may have been ruffled, and in this case he becomes dangerous.

“An old Namaqua chief with whom I was conversing, and who had been accustomed to lions from childhood, fully corroborated these opinions, and also that there is that in the eye of man before which the lion quails. He assured me that the lion very seldom attacks a man if not provoked; but he will approach him within a few paces and survey him steadily. Sometimes he attempts to get behind him, as if he could not stand his look, but was desirous of springing upon him unawares. He said, that if a man in such a case attempted to fly, he would run the greatest danger, but that if he had presence of mind to

confront the animal, it would in almost every instance after a short time retire.

“Now I have already brought forward the instance of Muller and the lion, as a proof of the effect of a man’s eye upon the lion. I will now give another, still more convincing, as the contact was still closer, and the lion had even tasted blood.

“A boor of the name of Gyt was out with one of his neighbours hunting. Coming to a fountain, surrounded as usual with tall reeds and rushes, Gyt gave his gun to his comrade, and alighted to see if there was any water remaining in it; but as he approached the fountain, an enormous lion started up close at his side, and seized him by the left arm. Gyt, although thus taken by surprise, stood motionless and without struggling, for he was aware that the least attempt to escape would occasion his immediate destruction. The animal also remained motionless, holding Gyt

fast by the arm with his fangs, but without biting it severely, at the same time shutting his eyes, as if he could not withstand the eyes of his victim fixed upon him."

"What a terrible position!"

"Yes; but I may here observe that the lion was induced to seize the man in consequence of their coming so completely in contact, and, as it were, for self-defence. Had they been farther apart, the lion would, as usually is the case, have walked away; and, moreover, the eye of the man being so close to him, had, at the same time, more power over the lion, so as to induce him to shut his own. But, to continue—

"As they stood in this position, Gyt recovered his presence of mind, and beckoned to his comrade to advance with his gun and shoot the lion through the head. This might easily have been done, as the animal continued still with his eyes closed, and Gyt's body con-

cealed any object approaching. But his comrade was a cowardly scoundrel, and instead of coming to Gyt's assistance, he cautiously crawled up a rock to secure himself from any danger. For a long while Gyt continued earnestly to entreat his comrade by signs to come to his assistance—the lion continuing all this while perfectly quiet—but in vain.”

“How my blood boils at the conduct of this scoundrel,” said the Major; “admitting his first impulse to have been fear, yet to allow his comrade to remain in that position for so long a while, covers him with infamy.”

“I think if Gyt escaped he must have felt very much inclined to shoot the wretch himself.”

“The lion hunters affirm that if Gyt had but persevered a little longer, the animal would have at last released his hold and left Gyt uninjured; that the grip of the lion was more from fear that the man would hurt him,

than from any wish to hurt the man, and such is my opinion. But Gyt, indignant at the cowardice of his comrade, and losing patience with the lion, at last drew his hunting-knife, which all the boors invariably carry at their side, and with all the power of his right arm, thrust it into the lion's breast.

“The thrust was a deadly one, for it was aimed with judgment, and Gyt was a bold and powerful man ; but it did not prove effectual so as to save Gyt's life, for the enraged lion, striving in his death agonies to grapple with Gyt,—held at arm's length by the strength of desperation on the part of the boor,—so dreadfully lacerated with his talons the breast and arms of poor Gyt, that his bones were left bare.

“At last the lion fell dead, and Gyt fell with him. His cowardly companion, who had witnessed this fearful struggle from the rock, now took courage to advance, and carried the

mangled body of Gyt to the nearest house. Medical aid was at hand, but vainly applied, as, on the third day, he died of a locked jaw. Such was the tragical end of this rencontre, from the sheer cowardice of Gyt's companion.

"I could mention many other instances in which lions have had men in their power and have not injured them, if they have neither attempted to escape nor to assault ; but I think I have given enough already, not only to prove the fact of his general forbearance towards man, but also that there is something in the eye of man at which the lion and other animals, I believe, will quail."

"I can myself give an instance that this fascinating effect, or whatever it may be, of the human eye, is not confined wholly to the lion," said the Major.

"One of our officers in India, having once rambled into a jungle adjoining the British encampment, suddenly encountered a Bengal

tiger. The meeting was evidently most unexpected on both sides, and both parties made a dead halt, earnestly gazing at each other. The officer had no firearms with him, although he had his regulation sword by his side, but that he knew would be no defence if he had to struggle for life with such a fearful antagonist. He was, however, a man of undaunted courage, and he had heard that even a Bengal tiger might be checked, by looking him steadily in the face.

“ His only artillery being, like a lady’s, that of his eyes, he directed them point blank at the tiger. He would have infinitely preferred a rifle, as he was not at all sure but that his eyes might miss fire. However, after a few minutes, during which the tiger had been crouched ready for his spring, the animal appeared disturbed and irresolute, slunk on one side, and then attempted to crawl round behind the officer.

“ This, of course, the officer would not permit, and he turned to the tiger as the tiger turned, with the same constancy that, Tom Moore says, the ‘ sunflower turns to the sun.’ The tiger then darted into the thicket, and tried to catch him by coming suddenly upon him from another quarter, and taking him by surprise ; but our officer was wide awake, as you may suppose, and the tiger finding that it was no go, at last went off himself, and the officer immediately went off too, as fast as he could, to the encampment.”

“ I am glad to have heard your narrative, Major,” replied Swinton ; “ for, many doubts have been thrown upon the question of the power of the human eye, and your opinion is a very corroborative one.”

“ Do not you imagine that the lion-tamers who exhibit in Europe have taken advantage of this peculiar fact ? ”

“ I have no doubt but that it is one of their

great helps; but I think that they resort to other means, which have increased the instinctive fear that the animals have of them. I have witnessed these exhibitions, and always observed that the man never for a moment took his eyes off the animal which he was playing with or commanding."

"I have observed that also; but what are the other means to which you allude?"

"I cannot positively say, but I can only express an opinion. The most painful and most stunning effects of a blow upon any part of the body, not only of man but of brutes, is a blow on the nose. Many animals, such as the seal and others, are killed by it immediately, and there is no doubt but a severe blow on that tender part will paralyze almost any beast for the time and give him a dread for the future. I believe that repeated blows upon the nose will go farther than any other means to break the courage of any

beast, and I imagine that these are resorted to ; but it is only my opinion, recollect, and it must be taken for just as much as it is worth."

"Do not you think that animals may be tamed by kindness, if you can produce in them the necessary proportion of love and fear?"

"Yes, I was about to say every animal, but I believe some must be excepted ; and this is from their having so great a fear of man rather than from any other cause. If their fear could be overcome, they might be tamed. Of course there are some animals which have not sufficient reasoning power to admit of their being tamed ; for instance, who would ever think of taming a scorpion?"

"I believe that there is one animal which, although taken as a cub, has resisted every attempt to tame it in the slightest degree,—this is the grizzly bear of North America."

"I have heard so too," replied Swinton ;
"at all events, up to the present time they have

been unsuccessful. It is an animal of most unamiable disposition, that is certain; and I would rather encounter ten lions, if all that they say of it is true. But it is time for us to go to bed. Those fires are getting rather low. Who has the watch?"

The Major rose and walked round to find the Hottentot who was on that duty, and found him fast asleep. After sundry kicks in the ribs, the fellow at last woke up.

"Is it your watch?"

"Yaw, Mynher," replied Big Adam, rolling out of his kaross.

"Well then you keep it so well, that you will have no tobacco next time it is served out."

"Gentlemen all awake and keep watch, so I go to sleep a little," replied Adam, getting up on his legs.

"Look to your fires, Sir," replied the Major, walking to his wagon.

CHAPTER V.

As they fully expected to fall in with a heard of buffaloes as they proceeded, they started very early on the following morning. They had now the satisfaction of finding that the water was plentiful in the river, and, in some of the large holes which they passed, they heard the snorting and blowing of the hippopotami, to the great delight of the Hottentots, who were very anxious to procure one, being very partial to its flesh.

As they travelled that day, they fell in with a small party of Bushmen ; they were shy at first, but one or two of the women at last

approached, and receiving some presents of snuff and tobacco, the others soon joined; and as they understood from Omrah and the Hottentots that they were to hunt in the afternoon, they followed the caravan, with the hopes of obtaining food.

They were a very diminutive race, the women, although very well formed, not being more than four feet high. Their countenances were pleasing, that is the young ones; and one or two of them would have been pretty, had they not been so disfigured with grease and dirt. Indeed the effluvia from them was so unpleasant, that our travellers were glad that they should keep at a distance; and Alexander said to Swinton, "Is it true that the lion and other animals prefer a black man to a white, as being of higher flavour, Swinton, or is it only a joke?"

"I should think there must be some truth in the idea," observed the Major; "for they say

that the Bengal tiger will always take a native in preference to a European."

"It is, I believe, not to be disputed," replied Swinton, "that for one European devoured by the lion or other animals, he feasts upon ten Hottentots or Bushmen, perhaps more; but I ascribe the cause of his so doing, not exactly to his perceiving any difference in the flesh of a black and a white man, and indulging his preference. The lion, like many other beasts of prey, is directed to his game by his scent as well as by his eye; that is certain. Now I appeal to you, who have got rid of these Bushmen, and who know so well how odorous is the skin of a Hottentot, whether a lion's nose is not much more likely to be attracted by one of either of these tribes of people, than it would by either you or me. How often, in travelling, have we changed our position, when the wind has borne down upon us the effluvia of the Hottentot who was

driving—why that effluvia is borne down with the wind for miles, and is as savoury to the lion, I have no doubt, as a beef-steak is to us.”

“There can, I think, be no doubt of that,” said Alexander; “but it is said that they will select a Hottentot from white men.”

“No doubt of it, because they follow up the scent right to the party from whence it emanates. I can give you an instance of it. I was once travelling with a Dutch farmer, with his wagon and Hottentots. We unyoked and lay down on the sand for the night: there were the farmer and I, two Hottentot men, and a woman—by the bye, a very fat one, and who consequently was more heated by the journey. During the night a lion came and carried away the woman from among us all, and by his tracks, as we found on the following morning, he had passed close to the farmer and myself.”

“Was the woman killed?”

“The night was so dark that we could see

nothing; we were roused by her shrieks, and seized our guns, but it was of no use. I recollect another instance which was not so tragical. A Hottentot was carried off by a lion during the night, wrapped up in his sheep-skin caross, sleeping, as they usually do, with his face to the ground. As the lion trotted away with him, the fellow contrived to wriggle out of his caross, and the lion went off with only his mantle."

"Well, I should think one of the carosses must be a very savoury morsel for a hungry lion," said the Major;—"but I imagine it is almost time to unyoke, we must have travelled nearly twenty miles, and these forests promise well for the game we are in search of."

"I suspect that they contain not only buffaloes, but elephants: however, we shall soon find out by examining the paths down to the river, which they make in going for water."

"I think that yonder knoll would be a good

place to fix our encampment, Swinton," said the Major; "it is well shaded with mimosas, and yet clear of the main forest."

"Well, you are Quarter-Master General, and must decide."

The Major ordered Bremen to arrange the wagons as usual, and turn the cattle out to feed. As soon as this had been accomplished, they saddled their horses, and awaited the return of Swanevelt, who had gone to reconnoitre. Shortly afterwards he returned, with the report that there were the tracks of elephants, buffaloes, and lions, in every direction by the river's banks; and as the dogs would now be of use, they were ordered to be let loose, which they seldom were, unless the game was large, and to be regularly hunted down. Our travellers mounted and proceeded into the forest, accompanied by all the Hottentots except the cattle-keepers, and the Bushmen; Bremen, Swanevelt, and Omrah only being on horse-

back, as well as themselves. As they rode forward slowly and cautiously, at the outset, Swinton asked the Major whether he had ever shot buffaloes.

“ Yes, in India,” replied the Major ; “ and desperate animals they are in that country.”

“ I was about to say that you will find them such here ; and, Alexander, you must be very careful. In the first place, a leaden bullet is of little use against their tough hides, and, I may almost say, impenetrable foreheads. The best shot is under the fore-shoulder.”

“ Our balls are hardened with tin,” observed Alexander.

“ I know that,” replied Swinton ; “ but still they are most dangerous animals, especially if you fall in with a single buffalo. It is much safer to attack a herd ; but we have no time to talk over the matter now, only, as I say, be very careful, and whatever you do, do not ap-

proach one which is wounded, even if he be down on his knees. But here comes Bremen with news."

The Hottentot came up and announced that there was a large herd of buffaloes on the other side of the hill, and proposed that they should take a sweep round them, so as to drive them towards the river.

This proposal was considered good, and was acted upon; and, after riding about a mile, they gained the position which seemed the most desirable. The dogs were then let loose, and the Hottentots, on foot, spread themselves on every side, shouting so as to drive the animals before them. The herd collected together, and for a short while stood at bay with the large bulls in front, and then set off through the forest towards the river, followed by all the hunters on horse and on foot. In a quarter of an hour the whole herd had taken refuge in a large pool in the river, which, with the reeds

and rushes, and small islands in the centre, occupied a long slip of ground.

The Major, with Swanevelt and two other Hottentots, proceeded farther up the river, that they might cross it, before the attack commenced, and the others agreed to wait until the signal was given by the Major's firing. As soon as they heard the report of the Major's rifle, Swinton and Alexander, with their party, advanced to the banks of the river. They plunged in, and were soon up to the horses' girths, with the reeds far above their heads. They could hear the animals forcing their way through the reeds, but could not see them; and, after some severe labour, Swinton said—"Alexander, it will be prudent for us to go back; we can do nothing here, and we shall stand a chance of being shot by our own people, who cannot see us. We must leave the dogs to drive them out, or the Hottentots and Bushmen; but we must regain the banks."

Just as Swinton said this, a loud rushing was heard through the reeds. "Look out!" cried he; but he could say no more before the reeds opened, and a large hippopotamus rushed upon them, throwing over Alexander's horse on his side, and treading Alexander and his horse both deep under the water as he passed over them and disappeared. Although the water was not more than four feet in depth, it was with difficulty that the horse and rider could extricate themselves from the reeds, among which they had been jammed and entangled; and Alexander's breath was quite gone when he at last emerged. Bremen and Swinton hastened to give what assistance they could, and the horse was once more on his legs. "My rifle," cried Alexander, "it is in the water." "We will find it," said Swinton; "haste up to the banks as fast as you can, for you are defenceless."

Alexander thought it advisable to follow

Swinton's advice, and with some difficulty regained the bank, where he was soon afterwards followed by Swinton and Bremen, who had secured his rifle. Alexander called Omrah, and sent him to the caravan for another rifle, and then, for the first time, he exclaimed, "Oh, what a brute. It was lucky the water was deep, or he would have jammed me on the head, so that I never should have risen up again."

"You have indeed had a providential escape, Alexander," replied Swinton; "is your horse hurt?"

"He must be, I should think," said Alexander, "for the animal trod upon him, but he does not appear to shew it at present."

In the meantime, several shots were fired from the opposite side of the river by the Major and his party, and occasionally the head or horns of a buffalo were seen above the reeds by the Hottentots, who remained with Swinton and Alexander; but the animals still adhered

to their cover. Omrah having brought another rifle, Bremen then proposed that the Hottentots, Bushmen, and dogs should force their way through the reeds and attempt to drive the animals out ; in which there would be no danger, as the animals could not charge with any effect in the deep water and thick rushes.

“ Provided they don’t meet with a hippopotamus,” said Alexander, laughing.

“ Won’t say a word about him, Sir,” replied Bremen, who then went and gave the directions.

The Hottentots and Bushmen, accompanied by the dogs, then went into the reeds, and their shouting and barking soon drove out some of the buffaloes on the opposite side, and the reports of the guns were heard.

At last one came out on that side of the river where Alexander and Swinton were watching ; Swinton fired, and the animal fell on its knees ;

a shot from Alexander brought it down dead, and turned on its side. One of the Bushmen ran up to the carcase, and was about to use his knife, when another buffalo charged from the reeds, caught the Bushman on his horns, and threw him many yards in the air. The Bushman fell among the reeds behind the buffalo, which in vain looked about for his enemy, when a shot from Bremen brought him to the ground.

Shortly afterwards the Bushman made his appearance from the reeds; he was not at all hurt, with the exception of a graze from the horns of the animal, and a contusion of the ribs.

The chase now became warm; the shouting of the Hottentots, the barking of the dogs, and the bellowing of the herd, which were forcing their way through the reeds before them, were very exciting. By the advice of Swinton, they took up their position on a higher

ground, where the horses had good footing, in case the buffaloes should charge.

As soon as they arrived there, they beheld a scene on the other side of the river, about one hundred yards from them, which filled them with anxiety and terror; the Major's horse was galloping away, and the Major not to be seen. Under a large tree, Swanevelt was in a sitting posture, holding his hands to his body as if severely wounded, his horse lying by his side, and right before him an enormous bull buffalo, standing motionless; the blood was streaming from the animal's nostrils, and it was evidently tottering from weakness and loss of blood; at last it fell.

"I fear there is mischief done," cried Swinton; "where can the Major be, and the two Hottentots who were with him? Swanevelt is hurt and his horse killed, that is evident. We had better call them off and let the

buffaloes remain quiet, or escape as they please."

"There is the Major," said Alexander, "and the Hottentots too; they are not hurt, don't you see them? they were up the trees—thank God."

They now observed the Major run up to Swanevelt, and presently the two Hottentots went in pursuit of the Major's horse. Shortly afterwards, Swanevelt, with the assistance of the Major, got upon his legs, and, taking up his gun, walked slowly away.

"No great harm done, after all," said Alexander; "God be praised—but here come the whole herd, Swinton."

"Let them go, my good fellow," replied Swinton, "we have had enough of buffalo-hunting for the present."

The whole herd had now broken from the reeds about fifty paces from where they were stationed, and with their tails raised, tossing

with their horns, and bellowing with rage and fear, darted out of the reeds, dripping with slime and mud, and rushed off towards the forest. In a few seconds they were out of sight.

“A good riddance,” said Swinton; “I hope the Major is now satisfied with buffalo-hunting.”

“I am, at all events,” replied Alexander. “I feel very sore and stiff. What a narrow escape that Bushman had.”

“Yes, he had indeed; but, Alexander, your horse is not well: he can hardly breathe. You had better dismount.”

Alexander did so, and unloosed his girths. Bremen got off his horse, and, offering it to Alexander, took the bridle of the other and examined him.

“He has his ribs broken, Sir,” said the Hot-tentot; “two of them, if not more.”

“No wonder, poor fellow; lead him gently,

Bremen. Oh, here comes the Major. Now we shall know what has occurred; and there is Swanevelt and the two men."

"Well, Major, pray tell us your adventures, for you have frightened us dreadfully."

"Not half so much as I have been frightened myself," replied the Major; "we have all had a narrow escape, I can assure you, and Swanevelt's horse is dead."

"Is Swanevelt hurt?"

"No, he was most miraculously preserved; the horn of the buffalo has grazed the whole length of his body, and yet not injured him. But let us go to the caravan and have something to drink, and then I will tell you all about it—I am quite done up, and my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth."

As soon as they had arrived at the caravan and dismounted, the Major drank some water, and then gave his narrative. "We had several shots on our side of the river, for

the buffaloes had evidently an intention of crossing over, had we not turned them. We had killed two, when a bull buffalo charged from the reeds upon Swanevelt, and before he could turn his horse and put him to his speed, the horns of the buffalo had ripped up the poor animal, and he fell with Swanevelt under him. The enraged brute disengaged himself from the horse, and made a second charge upon Swanevelt; but he twisted on one side, and the horn only grazed him, as I have mentioned. I then fired and wounded the animal. He charged immediately, and I turned my horse, but, from fright, he wheeled so suddenly, that I lost my stirrups, and my saddle turned round.

“I found that I could not recover my seat, and that I was gradually sliding under the horse’s belly, when he passed under a tree, and I caught a branch and swung myself on to it, just as the buffalo which was close behind us,

came up to me. As he passed under, his back hit my leg; so you may imagine it was 'touch and go.' The animal perceiving that the horse left him, and I was not on it, quitted his pursuit, and came back bellowing and roaring, and looking everywhere for me.

"At last it perceived Swanevelt, who had disengaged himself from the dead horse, and was sitting under the tree, apparently much hurt, as he is, poor fellow, although not seriously. It immediately turned back to him, and would certainly have gored him to death, had not Kloet, who was up in a tree, fired at the animal and wounded him mortally—for his career was stopped as he charged towards Swanevelt, and was not ten yards from him. The animal could proceed no further, and there he stood until he fell dead."

"We saw that portion of the adventure ourselves, Major," said Swinton; "and now we

will tell you our own, which has been equally full of incident and danger." Swinton, having related what had passed on his side of the river, the Major observed :

"You may talk about lions—but I had rather go to ten lion-hunts than one more buffalo-hunt. I have had enough of buffaloes for all my life."

"I am glad to hear you say so," replied Swinton; "for they are most ferocious and dangerous animals, as you may now acknowledge; and the difficulty of giving them a mortal wound renders the attack of them very hazardous. I have seen and heard enough of buffalo-hunting, to tell you that you have been fortunate, although you have lost one horse and have another very much hurt,—but here come the spoils of the chase; at all events, we will benefit by the day's sport, and have a good meal."

"I can't eat now," said Alexander; "I am

very stiff—I shall go and lie down for an hour or two.”

“And so shall I,” said the Major; “I have no appetite.”

“Well, then, we will all meet at supper,” said Swinton. “In the meantime I shall see if I can be of any use to Swanevelt. Where’s Omrah?”

“I saw him and Begum going out together just now,” said the Major; “what for, I do not know.”

“Oh! I told him to get some of the Bushman roots,” said Alexander. “They are as good as potatoes when boiled; and he has taken the monkey to find them.”

The Major and Alexander remained on their beds till supper-time, when Mahomed woke them up. They found themselves much refreshed by their sleep, and also found that their appetites had returned. Buffalo-steaks and fried Bushman roots were declared to be

a very good substitute for beef-steaks and fried potatoes; and after they had made a hearty meal, Alexander inquired of Swinton what he had seen of buffalo-hunting, when he had been at the Cape before.

“ I have only been once or twice engaged in a buffalo-hunt; but I can tell you what I have heard and what I have collected, from my own knowledge as to the nature of the animal, of which indeed to-day you have had a very good proof. I told you this morning, that a single buffalo was more dangerous than a herd; and the reason is this: At the breeding season, the fiercest bulls drive the others away from the herd, in the same manner as the elephants do; and these solitary buffaloes are extremely dangerous, as they do not wait to be attacked, but will attack a man without any provocation. They generally conceal themselves, and rush out upon you unawares, which makes it more difficult to escape from them. They are so bold, that

they do not fear the lion himself; and I have been told by the Dutch boors, that when a buffalo has killed one of their comrades by goring and tossing him, it will not leave its victim for hours, but continue to trample on him with its hoofs, crushing the body with its knees as an elephant does, and with its rough tongue stripping off the skin as far as it can. It does not do all this at one time, but it leaves the body, and returns again, as if to glut its vengeance."

"What a malicious brute!"

"Such is certainly its character. I recollect a history of a buffalo-hunting adventure, told me by a Dutch farmer, who was himself an eye-witness to the scene. He had gone out with a party to hunt a herd of buffaloes, which were grazing on a piece of marshy ground, sprinkled with a few mimosa trees. As they could not get within shot of the herd, without crossing a portion of the marsh, which was not safe for horses, they agreed to leave their

steeds in charge of two Hottentots, and to advance on foot ; thinking that in case any of the buffaloes should charge them, it would be easy to escape by running back to the marsh, which would bear the weight of a man, but not of a horse, much less that of a buffalo.

“They advanced accordingly over the marsh, and being concealed by some bushes, they had the good fortune to bring down, with the first volley, three of the fattest of the herd ; and also so severely wounded the great bull, which was the leader of the herd, that he dropped down on his knees, bellowing most furiously. Thinking that the animal was mortally wounded, the foremost of the hunters walked out in front of the bushes from which they had fired, and began to reload his musket as he advanced, in order to give the animal a finishing shot. But no sooner did the enraged animal see the man advancing, than he sprang

up and charged headlong at him. The man threw down his gun, and ran towards the marsh, but the beast was so close upon him, that he despaired of escaping by that direction, and turning suddenly round a clump of copsewood, began to climb an old mimosa tree which stood close to it.

“The buffalo was, however, too quick for him. Bounding forward with a roar, which the farmer told me was one of the most hideous and appalling sounds that he ever heard, he caught the poor fellow with his terrible horns, just as he had nearly got out of reach, and tossed him in the air with such force, that after whirling round and round to a great height, the body fell into the fork of the branches of the tree. The buffalo went round the tree roaring, and looking for the man, until, exhausted by wounds and loss of blood, it again fell down on its knees. The other hunters then attacked and killed him; but

they found their comrade, who was still hanging in the tree, quite dead."

"Well; I have no doubt but that such would have been the fate of Swanevelt or of me, had the brute got hold of us," said the Major; "I never saw such a malignant, diabolical expression in any animal's countenance as there was upon that buffalo's. A lion is, I should say, a gentleman and man of honour compared to such an evil-disposed ruffian."

"Well, Major, you have only to let them alone; recollect, you were the aggressor," said Swinton, laughing.

"Very true; I never wish to see one again."

"And I never wish to be in the way of a hippopotamus again, I can assure you," said Alexander, "for a greater want of politeness I never met with."

During this conversation the Hottentots and Bushmen at the other fires had not been idle.

The Hottentots had fried and eaten, and fried and eaten, till they could hold no more ; and the Bushmen, who in the morning looked as thin and meagre as if they had not had a meal for a month, were now so stuffed that they could hardly walk, and their lean stomachs were distended as round as balls. The Bushman who had been tossed by the buffalo came up and asked for a little tobacco, at the same time smiling and patting his stomach, which was distended to a most extraordinary size.

“ Yes, let us give them some,” said Alexander ; “ it will complete their day’s happiness. Did you ever see a fellow so stuffed ? I wonder he does not burst.”

“ It is their custom. They starve for days, and then gorge in this way when an opportunity offers, which is but seldom. Their calendar, such as it is, is mainly from recollections of feasting ; and I will answer for it, that if one Bushman were on some future day to

ask another when such a thing took place, he would reply, just before or just after the white men killed the buffaloes."

"How do they live in general?"

"They live upon roots at certain seasons of the year; upon locusts when a flight takes place; upon lizards, beetles—any thing. Occasionally they procure game, but not very often. They are obliged to lie in wait for it, and wound it with their poisoned arrows, and then they follow its track and look for it the next day. Subtle as the poison is, they only cut out the part near to the wound, and eat the rest of the animal. They dig pitholes for the hippopotamus and rhinoceros, and occasionally take them. They poison the pools for the game also; but their living is very precarious, and they often suffer the extremities of hunger."

"Is that the cause, do you imagine, of their being so diminutive a race, Swinton?"

"No doubt of it. Continual privation and

hardships from generation to generation, have, I have no doubt, dwindled them down to what you see."

"How is it that these Bushmen are so familiar? I thought that they were savage and irreclaimable."

"They are what are termed tame Bushmen; that is, they have lived near the farmers, and have, by degrees, become less afraid of the Europeans. Treated kindly, they have done good in return to the farmers by watching their sheep, and performing other little services, and have been rewarded with tobacco. This has given them confidence to a certain degree. But we must expect to meet with others that are equally wild, and who will be very mischievous; attempting to drive off our cattle, and watching in ambush all round our caravan, ready for any pilfering that they can successfully accomplish; and then we shall discover that we are in their haunts, without even seeing them."

“How so?”

“Because it will only be by their thefts that we shall find it out.—But it is time for bed, and as to-morrow is Sunday you will have a day of rest, which I think you both require.”

“I do,” replied Alexander, “so good night to you both.”

CHAPTER VI.

As arranged, they did not travel on the Sunday. Early in the morning, the oxen and horses and sheep were turned out to pasture: all except the horse which had been ridden by Alexander on the preceding day, and which was found to be suffering so much, that they took away a large quantity of blood from him, before he was relieved.

The Bushmen still remained with them, and were likely so to do as long as there was any prospect of food. The four buffaloes which had been killed, as well as the horse which had been gored to death, were found picked clean

to the bones on the following day, by the hyenas and other animals which were heard prowling during the whole night. But as large quantities of the buffalo-flesh had been cut off, and hung upon the trees near the caravan, there was more than sufficient for a second feast for the Bushmen and Hottentots, and there was nothing but frying and roasting during the whole of the day.

The sun was intensely hot, and Alexander and the Major both felt so fatigued from the exertions of the day before, that after breakfast they retired to their wagons, and Swinton did not attempt to disturb them, as they were in a sound sleep, till the evening, when they were much refreshed and very hungry. Swinton said, he had thought it better that they should not be awakened, as the heat was so overpowering, and they could perform divine service in the evening if they thought proper, when it would be cooler. This was agreed to,

and, after an early supper, they summoned all the Hottentots, who, although gorged, were still unwilling to leave their fires; as they said the Bushmen would devour all the flesh that was left, in their absence.

This remonstrance was not listened to, and they all assembled. The prayers were read and the service gone through by the light of a large fire, for it was very dark before the service was finished. The Bushmen, as the Hottentots prophesied, had taken advantage of their absence, to help themselves very liberally; and as Swinton read the prayers, the eyes of the Hottentots were continually turning round to their own fires, where the Bushmen were throwing on large pieces of buffalo-flesh, and before they were even heated through, were chewing them and tearing them to pieces with their teeth.

Never perhaps was there a congregation whose attention was so divided, and who

were more anxious for the conclusion of the service. This uneasiness shewn by the Hottentots, appeared at last to be communicated to the oxen, which were tied up round the wagons. The fire required replenishing, but none of the Hottentots moved to perform the office; perhaps they thought that if Swinton could no longer see, the service must conclude. But Swinton knew it by heart, and continued reading the Commandments, which was the last portion which he read, and Alexander and the Major repeated the responses. The Major, whose face was towards the cattle, had observed their uneasiness, and guessed the cause, but did not like to interrupt the service, as it was just over. Begum began clinging to him in the way she always did when she was afraid; Swinton had just finished, and the Major was saying, "Swinton, depend upon it," when a

roar like thunder was heard, and a dark mass passed over their heads.

The bellowing and struggling of the oxen was almost instantaneously succeeded by a lion, with an ox borne on his shoulder, passing right through the whole congregation, sweeping away the remnants of the fire and the Hottentots right and left, and vanishing in a moment from their sight. As may be imagined, all was confusion and alarm. Some screamed, some shouted and ran for their guns, but it was too late. On examination, it was found that the lion had seized the ox which had been tied up near to where they were sitting; their fire being nearly extinguished, and the one which should have been kept alight next to it having been altogether neglected by the Hottentots, in their anxiety to keep up those on which they had been broiling their buffalo-steaks.

The leather thongs by which the ox had been tied up were snapped like threads, and many

of the other oxen had, in their agony of fear, broken their fastenings and escaped. As the lion bounded away through the assembled party, it appeared as if the ox was not a feather's weight to him. He had however stepped rather roughly upon two of the Hottentots, who lay groaning, as if they had been severely hurt; but upon examination it was found that they had only been well scratched and covered with ashes. The Bushmen, however, had left their meal, and with their bows and small poisoned arrows had gone in pursuit. Bremen and one or two of the Hottentots proposed also to go, but our travellers would not permit them. About an hour afterwards the Bushmen returned, and Omrah had communication with them; and through Bremen they learnt that the Bushmen had come up with the lion about a mile distant, and had discharged many of their arrows at him, and they were convinced, with effect, as a heavy growl

or an angry roar was the announcement, when he was hit ; but although he was irritated, he continued his repast. Omrah then said, “ Lion dead to-morrow,—Bushmen find him.”

“ Well,” said Alexander, as they went to their wagons, which, in consequence of this event, and their having to make up large fires before they went to bed, they did not do till late, “ I believe this is the first time that divine service was ever wound up by such intrusion.”

“ Perhaps so,” replied Swinton ; “ but I think it proves that we have more cause for prayer, surrounded as we are by such danger. The lion might have taken one of us, and by this time we should have suffered a horrid death.”

“ I never felt the full force of the many similes and comparisons in the Scriptures, where the lion is so often introduced, till now,” observed Alexander.

“It was indeed a most awful sermon after the prayers,” said the Major. “I trust never to hear such a one again. But is it not our own fault? This is the second time that one of our oxen has been carried off by a lion, from the circle of fires not being properly attended to. It is the neglect of the Hottentots certainly; but if they are so neglectful, we should attend to them ourselves.”

“It will be as well to punish them for their neglect,” said Swinton, “by stopping their tobacco for the week; for if they find that we attend to the fires ourselves, they will not keep one in, that you may depend upon. However, we will discuss that point to-morrow, so good night.”

Omrah came to the Major the next morning, before the oxen were yoked, to say that the Bushmen had found the lion, and that he was not yet dead, but nearly so; that the animal had dragged away that portion of the ox that

he did not eat, about half a mile further; that there he had lain down, and he was so sick that he could not move.

At this intelligence they mounted their horses, and, guided by the Bushmen, arrived at the bush where the lion lay. The Bushmen entered at once, for they had previously reconnoitred, and were saluted with a low snarl, very different from the roar of the preceding night. Our travellers followed, and found the noble creature in his last agonies, his strength paralyzed, and his eyes closed. One or two of the small arrows of the Bushmen were still sticking in his hide, and did not appear to have entered more than half an inch; but the poison was so subtile, that it had rapidly circulated through his whole frame; and while they were looking down upon the noble beast, it dropped its jaws and expired.

As our travellers turned back to join the caravan, Alexander observed: "Those Bush-

men, diminutive as they are in size, and contemptible as their weapons appear, must be dangerous enemies, when the mere prick of one of their small arrows is certain death. What is their poison composed of?"

"Of the venom extracted from snakes, which is mixed up with the juice of the euphorbia, and boiled down till it becomes of the consistency of glue. They then dip the heads of the arrows into it, and let it dry on."

"Is then the venom of snakes so active after it has been taken away from the animal?"

"Yes, for a considerable time after. I remember a story, which is, I believe, well authenticated, of a man who had been bitten through his boot by a rattle-snake in America. The man died, and shortly afterwards his two sons died one after the other, with just the same symptoms as their father, although they had not been bitten by snakes. It was afterwards discovered that upon the father's death

the sons had one after the other taken possession of and put on his boots, and the boots being examined, the fang of the rattle-snake was discovered to have passed through the leather and remained there. The fang had merely grazed the skin of the two sons when they put on the boots, and had thus caused their death."

"Are the snakes here as deadly in their poison as the rattle-snake of America?"

"Equally so—that is, two or three of them; some are harmless. The most formidable is the cobra capella (not the same as the Indian snake of the same name). It is very large, being usually five feet long; but it has been found six and even seven feet. This snake has been known to dart at a man on horseback, and with such force as to overshoot his aim. His bite is certain death, I believe, as I never heard of a man recovering from the wound."

“Well, that is as bad as bad can be. What is the next?”

“The next is what they call the puff adder. It is a very heavy, sluggish animal, and very thick in proportion to its length, and when attacked in front, it cannot make any spring. It has, however, another power, which, if you are not prepared for it, is perhaps equally dangerous—that of throwing itself backward in a most surprising manner. This is, however, only when trod upon or provoked, but its bite is very deadly. Then two of the mountain adders are among the most dangerous snakes here. The mountain adder is small, and from its not being so easily seen and so easily avoided, is very dangerous, and its bite as fatal as the others.”

“I trust that is the end of your catalogue?”

“Not exactly ; there is another, which I have specimens of, but whose faculties I have never seen put to the test, which is called the

spiriting snake. It is about three feet long, and its bite, although poisonous, is not fatal. But it has a faculty, from which its name is derived, of spiriting its venom into the face of its assailant, and if the venom enters the eye, at which the animal darts it, immediate blindness ensues. There are a great many other varieties, some of which we have obtained possession of during our journey. Many of them are venomous, but not so fatal as the first three I have mentioned.

“Indeed, it is a great blessing that the Almighty has not made the varieties of snakes aggressive or fierce,—which they are not. Provided, as they are, with such dreadful powers, if they were so, they would indeed be formidable; but they only act in self-defence, or when provoked. I may as well here observe, that the Hottentots, when they kill any of the dangerous snakes, invariably cut off the head and bury it; and this they do, that no one may

by chance tread upon it, as they assert that the poison of the fangs is as potent as ever not only for weeks, but months afterwards."

"That certainly is a corroboration of the story that you told us of the rattle-snake's fang in the boot."

"It is so ; but although there are so many venomous snakes in this country, it is remarkable how very few accidents or deaths occur from them. I made an inquiry at the Moravian mission, where these venomous snakes are very plentiful, how many people they had lost by their bites, and the missionaries told me that out of 800 Hottentots belonging to the mission, they had only lost two men by the bites of snakes during a space of seven years ; and in other places where I made the same inquiry, the casualties were much less, in proportion to the numbers.

"Is the boa constrictor found in this part of Africa ?"

“Not so far south as we now are, but it is a few degrees more to the northward. I have never seen it, but I believe there is no doubt of its existence.”

“The South American Indians have a very subtile poison with which they kill their game. Are you aware, Swinton, of its nature? Is it like the Bushmen’s poison?”

“I know the poison well; it was brought over by Mr. Waterton, whose amusing works you may have read. It is called the wourali poison, and is said to be extracted from a sort of creeping vine which grows in the country. The natives, however, add the poison of snakes to the extract; and the preparation is certainly very fatal, as I can bear witness to.”

“Have you ever seen it tried?”

“Yes, I have tried it myself. When I was in Italy I became acquainted with Mr. W., and he gave two or three of us, who were

living together, a small quantity, not much more than two grains of mustard seed in size. We purchased a young mule to make the experiment upon; an incision was made in its shoulder and the poison inserted under the skin. I think in about six or seven minutes the animal was dead. Mr. W. said that the effects would have been more instantaneous, if the virtue of the poison had not somewhat deteriorated from its having been kept so long."

"The wourali poison only acts upon the nerves, I believe?" said the Major.

"Only upon the nerves; and although so fatal, if immediate means are resorted to, a person who is apparently dead from it may be brought to life again by the same process as is usual in the recovery of drowned or suffocated people. A donkey upon which the poison had acted, was restored in this manner, and for the remainder of his days permitted to

run in Sir Joseph Banks's park. But the poison of snakes acts upon the blood, and therefore occasions death without remedy."

"But there are remedies, I believe, for even the most fatal poisons?"

"Yes, in his provident mercy God has been pleased to furnish remedies at hand, and where the snake exists the remedy is to be found. The rattle-snake root is a cure, if taken and applied immediately; and it is well known that the ichneumon, when bitten by the cobra capella, in his attack upon it, will hasten to a particular herb and eat it immediately, to prevent the fatal effect of the animal's bite."

"I once saw a native of India," said the Major, "who for a small sum would allow himself to be bitten by a cobra capella. He was well provided with the same plant used by the ichneumon, which he swallowed plentifully and also rubbed on the wound. It is

impossible to say, but, as far as I could judge, there was no deception."

"I think it very possible; if the plant will cure the ichneumon, why not a man? I have no doubt but that there are many plants which possess virtues of which we have no knowledge. Some few, and perhaps some of the most valuable, we have discovered, but our knowledge of the vegetable kingdom, as far as its medicinal properties are known, is very slight; and perhaps many which were formerly known have, since the introduction of mineral antidotes, been lost sight of."

"Why, yes; long before chemistry had made any advances, we do hear in old romances of balsams of most sovereign virtues," said Alexander, laughing.

"Which, I may observe, is almost a proof that they did in reality exist; and the more so, because you will find that the knowledge of these sovereign remedies was chiefly in the

hands of the Jews, the oldest nation upon the earth; and from their constant communication with each other, most likely to have transmitted their knowledge from generation to generation."

"We have also reason to believe that not only they had peculiar *remedies* in their times, but also—if we are to credit what has been handed down to us—that the art of *poisoning* was much better understood," said the Major.

"At all events, they had not the knowledge of chemistry, which now leads to its immediate detection," replied Swinton. "But, Alexander, there are three hippopotami lying asleep on the side of the river. Have you a mind to try your skill?"

"No, not particularly," replied Alexander; "I have had enough of hippopotami. By the bye, the river is much wider than it was."

"Yes, by my calculation, we ought to travel

no more to the westward after to-day. We must now cut across to the Yellow or Vaal River. We shall certainly be two days without water or pasturage for the cattle, but they are in such good condition that they will not much feel it. There is a river which we shall cross near its head, but the chance of water is very small; indeed, I believe we shall find it nowhere, except in these great arteries, if I may so call them."

"Well; I was thinking so myself, Swinton, as I looked at the map yesterday when I lay in my wagon," said the Major; "so then tomorrow for a little variety; that is, a desert."

"Which it will most certainly be," replied Swinton; "for except on the banks of the large rivers there is no hopes of vegetation in this country at this season of the year; but in another month we may expect heavy falls of rain."

“The Bushmen have left us, I perceive,” said Alexander.

“Yes, they have probably remained behind to eat the lion.”

“What, will they eat it now that it has been poisoned?”

“That makes no difference to them, they merely cut out the parts wounded, and invariably eat all the carcasses of the animals which they kill, and apparently without any injury. There is nothing which a Bushman will not eat. A flight of locusts is a great feast to him.”

“I cannot imagine them to be very palatable food.”

“I have never tasted them,” replied Swinton, “but I should think not; they do not, however, eat them raw; they pull off their wings and legs, and dry their bodies; they then beat them into a powder.”

“Do you suppose that St. John’s fare of

locusts and wild honey was the locust which we are now referring to ?”

“ I do not know, but I should rather think not, and for one reason, which is, that although a person in the wilderness might subsist upon these animals, if always to be procured, yet the flights of locusts are very uncertain. Now there is a tree in the country where St. John retired, which is called the locust-tree, and produces a large sweet bean, shaped like the common French bean, but nearly a foot long, which is very palatable and nutritious. It is even now given to cattle in large quantities ; and I imagine that this was the locust referred to ; and I believe many of the commentators on the holy writings have been of the same opinion. I think we have now gone far enough for to-day ; we may as well halt here. Do you intend to hunt, Major ? I see some animals there at a distance.”

“ I should say not,” said Alexander ; “ if we

are to cross a desert tract to-morrow, we had better not fatigue our horses."

"Certainly not. No, Swinton, we will remain quiet, unless game comes to us."

"Yes, and look after our water-kegs being filled, and the fires lighted to-night," said Alexander; "and I trust we may have no more sermons from lions, although Shakespear does say, 'sermons from stones, and good in every thing.'"

They halted their caravan upon a rising ground, and having taken the precaution to see the water-kegs filled and the wood collected, they sat down to dinner upon fried ham and cheese; for the Hottentots had devoured all the buffalo-flesh, and demanded a sheep to be killed for supper. This was consented to, although they did not deserve it; but as their tobacco had been stopped for their neglect of providing fuel and keeping up the fires, it was considered politic not to make them too discontented.

Alexander had been walking by the side of the river with the Major, while the Hottentots were arranging the camp, and Swinton was putting away some new specimens in natural history, which he had collected, when Omrah, who was with them, put his finger to his lips and stopped them. As they perfectly understood what he required, they stood still and silent. Omrah then pointed to something which was lying on the low bank, under a tuft of rushes; but they could not distinguish it, and Omrah asked by signs for the Major's rifle—took aim and fired. A loud splashing was heard in the water, and they pushed their way through the high grass and reeds, until they arrived at the spot, when they perceived an animal floundering in the agonies of death.

“An alligator!” exclaimed the Major; “well, I had no idea that there were any here inland. They said that there were plenty at the mouths of the rivers, on the coast of the

Eastern Caffres, but I am astonished to find one here."

"What did you fire at?" asked Swinton, who now joined them.

"An alligator, and he is dead. I am afraid that he won't be very good eating," replied the Major.

"That's not an alligator, Major," said Swinton, "and it is very good eating. It is a large lizard of the guana species, which is found about these rivers; it is amphibious, but perfectly harmless, subsisting upon vegetables and insects. I tell you it is a great delicacy, ugly as it looks. It is quite dead, so let us drag it out of the water, and send it up to Mahomed by Omrah."

The animal, which was about four feet long, was dragged out of the water by the tail, and Omrah took it to the camp.

"Well, I really thought it was a small alligator," said the Major; "but now I per-

ceive my mistake. What a variety of lizards there appears to be in this country."

"A great many, from the chameleon upwards," replied Swinton. "By the bye, there is one which is said to be very venomous. I have heard many well-authenticated stories of the bite being not only very dangerous, but in some instances fatal. I have specimens of the animal in my collection. It is called here the geitje."

"Well, it is rather remarkable, but we have in India a small lizard, called the gecko by the natives, which is said to be equally venomous. I presume it must be the same animal, and it is singular that the names should vary so little. I have never seen an instance of its poisonous powers, but I have seen a whole company of sepoy's run out of their quarters because they have heard the animal make its usual cry in the thatch of the building; they say that it drops down upon people from the roof."

“Probably the same animal; and a strong corroboration that the report of its being venomous is with good foundation.”

“And yet if we were to make the assertion in England, we should in all probability not be believed.”

“Not by many, I grant—not by those who only know a little; but by those who are well informed, you probably would be. The fact is, from a too ready credulity, we have now turned to almost a total scepticism, unless we have ocular demonstration. In the times of Marco Polo, Sir John Mandeville, and others, say in the fifteenth century, when there were but few travellers and but little education, a traveller might assert almost any thing, and gain credence; latterly a traveller hardly dare assert any thing. Le Vaillant and Bruce, who travelled in the South and North of Africa, were both stigmatized as liars, when they published their accounts of what

they had seen, and yet every tittle has since been proved to be correct. However, as people now are better informed, they do not reject so positively; for they have certain rules to guide them between the possible and the impossible."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean, for instance, that if a person was to tell me that he had seen a mermaid, with the body of a woman and the scaly tail of a fish, I should at once say that I could not believe him. And why? because it is contrary to the laws of nature. The two component parts of the animal could not be combined, as the upper portion would belong to the mammalia, and be a hot-blooded animal, the lower to a cold-blooded class of natural history. Such a junction would, therefore, be impossible. But there are, I have no doubt, many animals still undiscovered, or rather still unknown to Europeans, the descrip-

tion of which may at first excite suspicion, if not doubt. But, as I have before observed, the account would, in all probability, not be rejected by a naturalist, although it might be by people without much knowledge of the animal kingdom, who would not be able to judge by comparison whether the existence of such an animal was credible. Even fabulous animals have had their origin from existing ones. The unicorn is, no doubt, the gemsbok antelope; for when you look at the animal at a distance, its two horns appear as if they were only one, and the Bushmen have so portrayed the animal in their caves. The dragon also is not exactly imaginary; for, the *lacerta volans*, or flying lizard of Northern Africa, is very like a small dragon in miniature. So that even what has been considered as fabulous has arisen from exaggeration or mistake."

"You think, then, Swinton, that we are bound to believe all that travellers tell us?"

“Not so; but not to reject what they assert, merely because it does not correspond with our own ideas on the subject. The most remarkable instance of unbelief was relative to the aërolites or meteoric stones formed during a thunder-storm in the air, and falling to the earth. Of course you have heard that such have occurred?”

“I have,” replied the Major, “and I have seen several in India.”

“This was treated as a mere fable not a century back; and when it was reported (and not the first time) that such a stone had fallen in France, the *savans* were sent in deputation to the spot. They heard the testimony of the witnesses; that a loud noise was heard in the air; that they looked up and beheld an opaque body descending; that it fell on the earth with a force which nearly buried it in the ground, and was so hot at the time that it could not be touched with the hand. It afterwards became

cold. Now the *savans* heard all this and pronounced that it could not be ; and, for a long while, every report of the kind was treated with contempt. Now every one knows, and every one is fully satisfied of the fact, and not the least surprise is expressed when they are told of the circumstance. As Shakespeare makes Hamlet observe very truly—"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

CHAPTER VII.

THERE was no alarm during the night, and the next morning they yoked the oxen and changed their course to the northward. The whole of the cattle had been led down to the river to drink, and allowed two hours to feed before they started, for they were about to pass through a sterile country of more than sixty miles, where they did not expect to find either pasturage or water. They had not left the river more than three miles behind them, when the landscape changed its appearance. As far as the eye could scan the horizon, all vestiges of trees had disappeared, and now the ground

was covered with low stunted bushes and large stones. Here and there were to be seen small groups of animals, the most common of which were the quaggas. As our travellers were in the advance, they started six or seven ostriches which had been sitting, and a ball from the Major's rifle brought one to the ground, the others running off at a velocity that the fastest horse could scarcely have surpassed.

"That was a good shot, Major," said Alexander.

"Yes," replied Swinton, "but take care how you go too near the bird; you have broken his thigh, and he may be dangerous. They are very fierce. As I thought, here is the nest. Let Bremen kill the bird, he understands them, Major. It is the male, and those which have escaped are all females."

"What a quantity of eggs," said Alexander.
"Is the nest a joint concern?"

"Yes," replied Swinton. "All those which

are in the centre of the nest with their points upwards are the eggs for hatching. There are, let me see, twenty-six of them; and you observe that there are as many more round about the nest. Those are for the food of the young ostriches as soon as they are born. However, we will save them that trouble. Bremen must take the eggs outside of the nest for us, and the others the people may have. They are not very particular whether they are fresh or not."

"This is a noble bird," said the Major, "and has some beautiful feathers. I suppose we may let Bremen take the feathers out and leave the body?"

"Yes; I do not want it; but Bremen will take the skin, I dare say. It is worth something at the Cape."

As soon as the Hottentots had secured the eggs, and Bremen had skinned the ostrich, which did not occupy many minutes, they rode on, and Swinton then said—

“The male ostrich generally associates with from three to seven females, which all lay in the same nest. He sits as well as the females, and generally at night, that he may defend the eggs from the attacks of the hyenas or other animals.”

“You do not mean to say that he can fight these animals?”

“And kill them also. The ostrich has two powerful weapons; its wing, with which it has been often known to break a hunter's leg, the blow from it is so violent; and what is more fatal, its foot, with the toe of which it strikes and kills both animals and men. I once myself, in Namaqua Land, saw a Bushman who had been struck on the chest by the foot of the ostrich, and it had torn open his chest and stomach, so that his entrails were lying on the ground. I hardly need say that the poor wretch was dead.”

“I could hardly have credited it,” observed Alexander.

“The Bushmen skin the ostrich and spread the skin upon a frame of wicker-work ; the head and neck are supported by a stick thrust through them. The skin they fix on one of their sides, and carry the head and neck in one of their hands, while the other holds the bow and arrows. In this disguise—of course with the feathered side of him presented to the bird or beast he would get near to—he walks along, pecking with the head at the bushes, and imitating the motions of the ostrich. By this stratagem he very often is enabled to get within shot of the other ostriches, or the quaggas and gnoos which consort with these birds.”

“I should like to see that very much,” said the Major.

“You would be surprised at the close imitation, as I have been. I ought to have said that the Bushman whitens his legs with clay. It is, however, a service of danger, for I have, as I told you, known a man killed by the

male ostrich ; and the natives say that it is by no means uncommon for them to receive very serious injury."

"Hold hard," said the Major, "there is a lion ; what a terrible black mane he has got. What do you say, Swinton ? he is by himself."

Swinton looked at the animal, which was crossing about 300 yards ahead of them ; he was on a low hill with his head close to the ground.

"I certainly say not. Let him pass, by all means, and I only hope he will take no notice of us. I must give you the advice which an old Namaqua chief gave me. He said—'Whenever you see a lion moving in the middle of the day, you may be certain that he is in great want of food and very angry. Never attack one then, for they are very dangerous and most desperate.' If, therefore, Major, you wish a very serious affair, and one or two lives lost,

you will attack that animal. But you must expect that what I say will happen."

"Indeed, my dear Swinton, I neither wish to lose my own life, nor to risk those of others, and therefore we will remain here till his majesty has had time to get out of our way ; and I hope he may soon find a dinner."

By this time the caravan had come up with them, and they then proceeded. The face of the country became even more sterile, and at last not an animal of any description was to be seen. As there was nothing for the oxen to feed upon, they continued their route during the whole of the day, and at night they halted and secured the cattle to the wagons. Wood for fires they were not able to procure, and therefore they made one half of the Hottentots watch during the night with their muskets to scare off wild beasts. But, as Swinton observed, there was little chance of their being disturbed by lions or other animals, as they were so distant

from water, and there was no game near them, upon which the wild beasts prey; and so it proved, for during the whole night they did not even hear the cry of a hyena or a jackal.

At the first gleaming of light the oxen were again yoked, with the hopes of their being able to gain the Vaal River by night. The relay oxen were now put to, to relieve those which appeared to suffer most. At noon the heat was dreadful, and the horses, which could not support the want of water as the oxen could, were greatly distressed. They continued for about two hours more, and then perceived a few low trees. Begum, who had been kept without water that she might exert herself to find it, started off as fast as she could, followed by Omrah. After running to the trees, they altered their course to the eastward, towards some ragged rocks. The caravan arrived at the trees, which they found were growing on

the banks of the river Alexandria, which they knew they should pass, but not a drop of water was to be discovered ; even the pools were quite dry. As they searched about, all of a sudden Begum came running back screaming, and with every mark of terror, and clung, as usual, to the Major when frightened.

“ Where is the bush-boy ? ” said Bremen.

“ Something has happened,” cried Swinton ;
“ come all of you with your guns.”

The whole party, Hottentots and all, hastened towards the rocks where Omrah and Begum had been in search of water. As soon as they reached within fifty paces, quite out of breath with their haste, they were saluted with the quah, quah, of a herd of baboons, which were perched at the edge of the rocks, and which threatened them in their usual way, standing on their fore-legs, and making as if they would fly at them.

“ Now, then, what is to be done ? ” said the

Major. "Shall we fire? Do you think that they have possession of the boy?"

"If they have, they will let him go. Yes, we are too numerous for them now, and they will not shew fight, depend upon it. Let us all take good aim and fire a volley right into them."

"Well, then, I'll take that venerable old chap that appears to be the leader and the great grandfather of them all," said the Major. "Are you all ready?—then fire."

The volley had its effect; three or four of the animals were killed, many were wounded, and the whole herd went scampering off with loud shrieks and cries, the wounded trailing themselves after the others as well as they could.

The whole party then ascended the crags to look after Omrah—all but Begum, who would not venture. They had hardly gained the summit when they heard Omrah's voice below,

but could not see him. "There he is, Sir," said Swanevelt, "down below there." Swinton and the Major went down again, and at last, guided by the shouts of the boy, they came to a narrow cleft in the rock, about twenty feet deep, at the bottom of which they heard, but could not see the boy. The cleft was so narrow that none of the men could squeeze down it. Swinton sent one of them back for some leathern thongs or a piece of rope to let down to him.

During the delay, Bremen inquired of Omrah if he was hurt, and received an answer in the negative. When the rope came, and was lowered down to him, Omrah seized it, and was hauled up by the Hottentots. He appeared to have suffered a little, as his hair was torn out in large handfuls, and his shirt was in ribbons; but with the exception of some severe scratches from the nails of the baboons, he had no serious injury. Omrah

explained to the Hottentots, who could talk his language, that Begum and he had come to the cleft, and had discovered that there was water at the bottom of it; that Begum had gone down, and that he was following, when the baboons, which drank at the chasm, had come upon them. Begum had sprung up and escaped, but he could not; and that the animals had followed him down, until he was so jammed in the cleft, that he could descend no farther; and that there they had pulled out his hair and torn his shirt, as they saw. Having heard Omrah's story, and satisfied themselves that he had received no serious injury, they then went to where the baboons had been shot. Two were dead, but the old one which the Major had fired at, was alive, although severely wounded, having received two shots, one in his arm and the other in his leg, which was broken by the ball. All the poor old creature's fierceness appeared to have

left him. It was evidently very weak from the loss of blood, and sat down leaning against the rock. Every now and then it would raise itself, and look down upon the wound in its leg, examining the hole where the bullet had passed through; then it would hold up its wounded arm with its other hand, and look them in the face inquiringly, as much as to say, what have you done this for?

“Poor creature,” said Alexander; “how much its motions are those of a human being. Its mute expostulation is quite painful to witness.”

“Very true,” said the Major; “but still if it had not those wounds, it would tear you to pieces if it could.”

“That it certainly would,” said Swinton; “but still it is an object of pity. It cannot recover, and we had better put it out of its misery.”

Desiring Bremen to shoot the animal through the head, our travellers then walked

back to the caravan. As they returned by the banks of the river, they perceived Begum very busy scraping up the baked mud at the bottom of a pool.

“What is the princess about?” said Alexander.

“I know!” cried Omrah, who immediately ran to the assistance of the baboon; and after a little more scraping, he pulled out a live tortoise, about a foot long.

“I have heard that when the pools dry up, the tortoises remain in the mud till the pools are filled again,” said Swinton.

“Are they good eating, Swinton?”

“Excellent.”

“Turtle soup in the desert, that’s something unexpected.”

The Hottentots now set to work and discovered five or six more, which they brought out. They then tried in vain to get at the water in the deep cleft, but finding it impossible, the caravan continued its course.

“How much more of this desert have we to traverse,” said Alexander, “before we come to the river?”

“I fear that we shall not arrive there before to-morrow night,” said Swinton, “unless we travel on during the night, which I think will be the best plan. For, fatiguing as it will be to the animals, they will be even more exhausted if they pass another day under the burning sun, without water, and at night they will bear their work better. We gain nothing by stopping, as the longer they are on the journey, the more they will be exhausted.”

“I really am fearful for the horses, they suffer so much.”

“At night we will wash their mouths with a sponge full of water; we can spare so much for the poor creatures.”

“In the deserts of Africa, you have always one of three dangers to encounter,” said

Swinton ; “wild men, wild beasts, and want of water.”

“And the last is the worst of the three,” replied the Major. “We shall have a moon to-night for a few hours.”

“Yes, and if we had not, it would be of no consequence ; the stars give light enough, and we have little chance of wild beasts here. We now want water ; as soon as we get rid of that danger, we shall then have the other to encounter.”

The sun went down at last, the poor oxen toiled on with their tongues hanging out of their mouths. At sunset, the relay oxen were yoked, and they continued their course by the stars. The horses had been refreshed, as Swinton had proposed ; but they were too much exhausted to be ridden, and our travellers, with their guns on their shoulders, and the dogs loose, to give notice of any danger, now walked by the sides of the wagons over the

sandy ground. The stars shone out brilliantly, and even the tired cattle felt relief, from the comparative coolness of the night air. All was silent, except the creaking of the wheels of the wagons, and the occasional sighs of the exhausted oxen, as they thus passed through the desert.

“Well,” observed the Major, after they had walked about an hour without speaking, “I don’t know what your thoughts may have been all this while, but it has occurred to me, that a party of pleasure may be carried to too great lengths; and I think that I have been very selfish, in persuading Wilmot to undergo all that we have undergone and are likely to undergo, merely because I wished to shoot a giraffe.”

“I presume that I must plead guilty also,” replied Swinton, “in having assisted to induce him; but you know a naturalist is so ardent in his pursuit that he thinks of nothing else.”

“ I do not think that you have either of you much to answer for,” replied Alexander ; “ I was just as anxious to go as you were ; and as far as I am concerned, have not the slightest wish to turn back again, till we have executed our proposed plans. We none of us undertook this journey with the expectation of meeting with no difficulties, or no privations ; and I fully anticipate more than we have yet encountered or are encountering now. If I get back on foot and without a sole left to my shoe, I shall be quite content ; at the same time, I will not continue if you both wish to return.”

“ Indeed, my dear fellow, I have no wish but to go on ; but I was afraid that we were running you into dangers which we have no right to do.”

“ You have a right, allowing that I did not myself wish to proceed,” replied Alexander. “ You escorted me safe through the country to

ascertain a point in which you had not the slightest interest, and it would be indeed rewarding you very ill, if I were now to refuse to gratify you; but the fact is, I am gratifying myself at the same time."

"Well, I am very glad to hear you say so," replied the Major, "as it makes my mind at ease: what time do you think it is, Swinton?"

"It is about three o'clock; we shall soon have daylight, and I hope with daylight we shall have some sight to cheer us. We have travelled well, and cannot by my reckoning be far from the Vaal River. Since yesterday morning we have made sixty miles or thereabouts; and if we have not diverged from our course, the poor animals will soon be relieved."

They travelled on another weary hour, when Begum gave a cry and started off ahead of the wagons; the oxen raised their heads to the wind, and those which were not in the

yokes, after a short while broke away from the keepers, and galloped off, followed by the horses, sheep, and dogs. The oxen in the yokes also became quite unruly, trying to disengage themselves from the traces.

“They have smelt the water, it is not far off, Sir,” said Bremen; “we had better unyoke them all, and let them go.”

“Yes, by all means,” said Alexander.

So impatient were the poor beasts, that it was very difficult to disengage them, and many broke loose before it could be effected; as soon as they were freed, they followed their companions at the same rapid pace.

“At all events we shall know where to find them,” said the Major, laughing: “well I really so felt for the poor animals that I am as happy as if I was as thirsty as they are, and was now quenching my thirst. It’s almost daylight.”

As the day dawned they continued to ad-

vance in the direction that the animals had taken, and they then distinguished the trees that bordered the river, which was about two miles distant. As soon as it was broad daylight, they perceived that the whole landscape had changed in appearance. Even where they were walking there was herbage, and near to the river it appeared most luxuriant. Tall mimosa trees were to be seen in every direction, and in the distance large forests of timber. All was verdant and green, and appeared to them as a paradise after the desert in which they had been wandering on the evening before. As they arrived at the river's banks they were saluted with the lively notes of the birds hymning forth their morning praise, and found the cattle, after slaking their thirst, were now quietly feeding upon the luxuriant grass which surrounded them.

“Well may the Psalmist and prophets talk of the beauty of flowing rivers,” said Alex-

ander; "now we feel the truth and beauty of the language; one would almost imagine that the sacred writings were indited in these wilds."

"If not in these, they certainly were in the Eastern countries, which assimilate strongly with them," said Swinton; "but, as you truly say, it is only by having passed through the country that you can fully appreciate their beauties. We never know the real value of any thing till we have felt what it is to be deprived of it, and in a temperate climate, with a pump in every house, people cannot truly estimate the value of 'flowing rivers.'"

The Hottentots having now arrived, the cattle were driven back to the wagons and yoked, that they might be brought up to a spot which had been selected for their encampment. In the meantime our travellers, who were tired with their night's walk, lay down under a large mimosa tree, close to the banks of the river.

“We shall stay here a day or two, of course,” said the Major.

“Yes, for the sake of the cattle; the poor creatures deserve a couple of days’ rest.”

“Do you observe how the mimosas are torn up on the other side of the river?” said Swinton; “the elephants have been very numerous there lately.”

“Why do they tear the trees up?” said Alexander.

“To feed upon the long roots, which are very sweet; they destroy an immense number of the smaller trees in that manner.”

“Well, we must have another elephant hunt,” said the Major.

“We may have hunts of every kind, I expect, here,” replied Swinton: “we are now on the very paradise of wild animals, and the further we go the more we shall find.”

“What a difference there is in one day’s journey in this country,” observed Alexander:

“ yesterday morning there was not a creature to be seen, and all was silent as death. Now listen to the noise of the birds, and as for beasts, I suspect we shall not have far to look for them.”

“ No, for there is a hippopotamus just risen ; and now he’s down again—there’s food for a fortnight at one glance,” cried the Major.

“ How the horses and sheep are enjoying themselves—they are making up for lost time—but here come the wagons.”

“ Well, then, I must get up and attend to my department,” said the Major. “ I presume that we must expect our friends the lions again now.”

“ Where there is food for lions, you must expect lions, Major,” said Swinton.

“ Very true, and fuel to keep them off—by the bye, turtle soup for dinner, recollect ; tell Mahommed.”

“ I’ll see to it,” said Alexander, “ but we

must have something for breakfast, as soon as I have had a wash at the river's side—I would have a bathe, only I have such a respect for the hippopotami."

"Yes, you will not forget them in a hurry," said Swinton, laughing.

"Not as long as I have breath in my body, for they took all the breath out of it. Come, Swinton, will you go with me, and make your toilet at the river's banks?"

"Yes, and glad to do so; for I am covered with the sand of the desert."

CHAPTER VIII.

Our travellers remained very quiet that day and the next. The horses had suffered so much, that they required two days of rest, and they themselves were not sorry to be inactive after their fatiguing journey over the desert. The cattle enjoyed the luxuriant pasture, and although the tracks of lions were discovered very near to them, yet, as they had plenty of fuel and attended themselves to the fires, they had not any visits from them during the night. The Hottentots had been out to reconnoitre, and found a profusion of game, in a large plain about two miles distant; and it was decided

that they would rest where they were for a day or two, if the game were not frightened away. The river had been crossed by Swanenvelt, who stated that there was a large herd of elephants on the other side, and the tracks of the rhinoceros were to be seen on both sides of the river.

On the third morning after their arrival at the Vaal, they set off, accompanied by the Hottentots, to the plain which they had spoken off; riding through magnificent groups of acacia or camel thorn trees, many of which were covered with the enormous nests of the social grosbeaks. As they descended to the plain, they perceived large herds of brindled gnoos, quaggas, and antelopes, covering the whole face of the country as far as the eye could reach, moving about in masses to and fro, joining each other and separating, so that the whole plain appeared alive with them.

“Is not this splendid?” cried the Major.

“Such a sight is worth all the trouble and labour which we have undergone. What would they say in England, if they could but behold this scene?”

“There must be thousands and thousands,” said Alexander. “Tell me, Swinton, what beautiful animals are those of a purple colour?”

“They are called the purple sassabys,” replied Swinton; “one of the most elegant of the antelope tribe.”

“And those red and yellow out there?”

“They are the harte beests. I wish to have male and female specimens of both, if I can.”

“See!” said the Major, “there is a fine flock of ostriches. We are puzzled where to begin. Come, we have surveyed the scene long enough; now forward,—to change it.”

They rode down, and were soon within shot of the animals, and the rifles began their

work. The Hottentots commenced firing from various points, and, alarmed by the report of the guns, the animals now fled away in every direction, and the whole place was one cloud of dust. Our travellers put their horses to their speed, and soon came up with them again, as their numbers impeded the animals in their flight. Every shot told, for it was hardly possible to miss; and the Hottentots, who followed on foot, put them that were wounded out of their misery. At last, the horses were too fatigued and too much out of wind to continue the pursuit, and they reined up.

“Well, Alexander, this has been sport, has it not?” said the Major.

“Yes, a grand battue, on a grand scale, indeed.”

“There were three animals which you did not observe,” said Swinton; “but it was impossible to get at them, they were so far

off; but we must try for them another time."

"What were they?"

"The elands, the largest of the antelope tribe," replied Swinton, "and the best eating of them all. Sometimes they are nineteen hands high at the chest, and will weigh nearly 2,000lbs. It has the head of an antelope, but the body is more like that of an ox. It has magnificent straight horns, but they are not dangerous. They are easily run down, for, generally speaking, they are very fat and incapable of much exertion."

"We will look out for them to-morrow," said the Major. "See how the vultures are hovering over us; they know that there will be bones for them to pick this night."

"More than bones," replied Alexander; "for what can we do with so many carcasses? There is provision for a month, if it would keep.

What a prodigious variety of animals there appears to be in this country."

"Yes, they are congregated here, because the country, from want of rain, may be considered as barren. But within eight or nine degrees of latitude from the Cape, we find the largest and most minute of creation. We have the ostrich and the little creeper among the birds. Among the beasts we have the elephant, weighing 4,000lbs., and the black specked mouse, weighing a quarter of an ounce. We have the giraffe, seventeen feet high, and the little viverra, a sort of weasel, of three inches. I believe there are thirty varieties of antelopes known and described; eighteen of them are found in this country, and there are the largest and the smallest of the species; for, we have the eland, and we have the pigmy antelope, which is not above six inches high. We see here also the intermediate links of many genera, such as the eland and the gnou; and as we find the

elephant, the rhinoceros, and Wilmot's friend the hippopotamus, we certainly have the bulkiest animals in existence."

Bremen now came up to say that they had discovered a rhinoceros close to the river-side, concealed in the bushes underneath a clump of acacia. The Major and Alexander having declared their intention of immediately going in pursuit, Swinton advised them to be cautious, as the charge of a rhinoceros was a very awkward affair, if they did not get out of the way. They rode down to the clump of trees and bushes where the animal was said to be hid, and, by the advice of Bremen, sent for the dogs to worry the animal out. Bremen, who was on foot, was desired by the Major to take the horse which Omrah rode that he might be more expeditious, and our travellers remained with a clear space of about 200 yards between them and the bushes where the animal was concealed. The Hottentots had also fol-

lowed them, and were ordered on no account to fire till they had taken their positions, and the dogs were sent in to drive the animal out.

When Bremen was but a short distance from them with the dogs, Swinton advised that they should dismount and take possession of a small clump of trees which grew very close together, as they would be concealed from the animal. They called Omrah to take the horses, but he was not to be seen, so they gave them to one of the Hottentots, to lead them away to some distance out of harm's way.

“The vision of the rhinoceros is so limited,” observed Swinton, “that it is not difficult to get out of his way on his first charge ; but at his second he is generally prepared for your manœuvre. A ball in the shoulder is the most fatal. Look out, Bremen has turned in the dogs.” The barking of the dogs, which commenced as soon as they entered the bushes, did not continue more than a

minute when a female rhinoceros of the black variety burst out of the thicket in pursuit of the retreating dogs. Several shots were fired by the Hottentots, who were concealed in different quarters, without effect; the animal rushing along and tearing up the ground with its horns, looking out for its enemies. At last it perceived a Hottentot, who shewed himself from a bush near to where our travellers were concealed. The animal charged immediately, and in charging was brought down on its knees by a shot from Alexander. The Hottentots rushed out, regardless of Swinton's calling out to them to be careful, as the animal was not dead, and had surrounded it within a few yards, when it rose again and fiercely charged Swanevelt, who narrowly escaped. A shot from the Major put an end to its career, and they then walked up to where the animal lay, when a cry from Omrah, who was standing near the river, attracted their notice, and they

perceived that the male rhinoceros, of whose presence they were not aware, had just burst out of the same covert, and was charging towards them.

Every one immediately took to his heels ; many of the Hottentots in their fear dropping their muskets, and fortunately the distance they were from the covert gave them time to conceal themselves in the thickets before the animal could come up with them. A shot from Swinton turned the assailant, who now tore up the earth in his rage, looking everywhere round with its sharp flashing eye for a victim. At this moment, while it seemed hesitating and peering about, to the astonishment of the whole party, Omrah shewed himself openly on the other side of the rhinoceros, waving his red handkerchief, which he had taken off his head. The rhinoceros, the moment that the boy caught his eye, rushed furiously towards him. "The boy's lost," cried Swinton ; but

hardly had the words gone from his mouth, when, to their astonishment, the rhinoceros disappeared, and Omrah stood capering and shouting with delight. The fact was, that Omrah, when he had left our travellers, had gone down towards the river, and as he went along had with his light weight passed over what he knew full well to be one of the deep pits dug by the Bushmen to catch those animals. Having fully satisfied himself that it was so, he had remained by the side of it, and when the rhinoceros rushed at him, he kept the pit between him and the animal. His object was to induce the animal to charge at him, which it did, and when within four yards of the lad, had plunged into the pit dug for him. The success of Omrah's plan explained the whole matter at once, and our travellers hastened up to where the rhinoceros was impounded, and found that a large stake, fixed upright in the centre of the pit, had impaled the animal. A

shot from the Major put an end to the fury and the agony of the animal.

“I never was more excited in my life; I thought the boy was mad and wanted to lose his life,” said Alexander.

“And so did I,” replied Swinton; “and yet I ought to have known him better. It was admirably done; here we have an instance of the superiority of man endowed with reasoning power over brutes. A rhinoceros will destroy the elephant; the lion can make no impression on him, and flies before him like a cat. He is in fact the most powerful of all animals; he fears no enemy, not even man, when he is provoked or wounded; and yet he has fallen by the cleverness of that little monkey of a bush-boy. I think, Major, we have done enough now, and may go back to the caravan.”

“Yes, I am well satisfied with our day’s sport, and am not a little hungry. We may now let the Hottentots bring home as much

game as they can. You have taken care to give directions about your specimens, Swinton?"

"Yes, Bremen knows the animals which I require, and is now after them. Omrah, run and tell that fellow to bring our horses here."

"Swinton, can birds and beasts talk, or can they not?" said the Major. "I ask that question because I am now looking at the enormous nests of the grosbeaks. It is a regular town with some hundreds of houses. These birds, as well as those sagacious animals, the beaver, the ant, and the bee, not to mention a variety of others, must have some way of communicating their ideas."

"That there is no doubt of," replied Swinton, laughing; "but still I believe that man only is endowed with speech."

"Well, we know that; but if not with speech, they must have some means of communication which answers as well."

“As far as their wants require it, no doubt,” replied Swinton; “but to what extent is hidden from us. Animals have instinct and reasoning powers, but not reason.”

“Where is the difference?”

“The reasoning powers are generally limited to their necessities, but with animals who are the companions of man, they appear to be more extended.”

“We have a grand supper to-night,” said Alexander; “what shall I help you to—hartebeest, sassyby, or rhinoceros?”

“Thank you,” replied the Major, laughing; “I’ll trouble you for a small portion of that rhinoceros-steak, underdone if you please.”

“How curious that would sound in Grosvenor-square.”

“Not if you shot the animals in Richmond Park,” said Swinton.

“Those rascally Hottentots will collect no fuel to-night if we do not make them do it

now," said the Major. "If they once begin to stuff, it will be all over with them."

"Very true, we had better set them about it before the feast begins. Call Bremen, Omrah."

Having given their directions, our party finished their supper, and then Alexander asked Swinton whether he had ever known any serious accidents from the hunting of the rhinoceros.

"Yes," replied Swinton, "I once was witness to the death of a native chief."

"Then pray tell us the story," said the Major. "By hearing how other people have suffered, we learn how to take care of ourselves."

"Before I do so, I will mention what was told me by a Namaqua chief about a lion; I am reminded of it by the Major's observations as to the means animals have of communicating with each other. Once when I was

travelling in Namaqua Land, I observed a spot which was imprinted with at least twenty spoors or marks of the lion's paw ; and as I pointed them out, a Namaqua chief told me that a lion had been practising his leap. On demanding an explanation, he said, that if a lion sprang at an animal, and missed it by leaping short, he would always go back to where he sprang from, and practise the leap so as to be successful on another occasion ; and he then related to me the following anecdote, stating that he was an eye-witness to the incident.

“ I was passing near the end of a craggy hill, from which jutted out a smooth rock, of from ten to twelve feet high, when I perceived a number of zebras galloping round it, which they were obliged to do, as the rock beyond was quite steep. A lion was creeping towards the rock, to catch the male zebra, which brought up the rear of the herd. The lion sprang and missed

his mark; he fell short, with only his head over the edge of the rock, and the zebra galloped away, switching his tail in the air. Although the object of his pursuit was gone, the lion tried the leap on the rock a second and a third time, till he succeeded. During this, two more lions came up and joined the first lion. They seemed to be talking, for they roared a great deal to each other; and then the first lion led them round the rock again and again. Then he made another grand leap, to shew them what he and they must do another time. The chief added, they evidently were talking to each other, but I could not understand a word of what they said, although they talked loud enough; but I thought it was as well to be off, or they might have some talk about me."

"Well, they certainly do not whisper," said the Major, laughing. "Thank you for that story, Swinton, and now for the rhinoceros-hunt."

“I was once out hunting with a Griqua, of the name of Henrick, and two or three other men; we had wounded a springbok and were following its track, when we came upon the footing of a rhinoceros, and shortly afterwards we saw a large black male in the bush.”

“You mention a black rhinoceros; is there any other?”

“Yes, there is a white rhinoceros, as it is called, larger than the black, but not so dangerous. It is in fact a stupid sort of animal. The black rhinoceros, as you are aware, is very fierce. Well, to continue: Henrick slipped down behind a bush, fired and wounded the animal severely in the fore-leg. The rhinoceros charged, we all fled, and the animal singling out one of our men, closely pursued him; but the man stopping short, while the horn of the rhinoceros ploughed up the ground at his heels, dexterously jumped on one side. The rhinocero-

ros missed him and passed on in full speed, and before the brute could recover himself and change his course, the whole of us had climbed up into trees. The rhinoceros, limping with his wound, went round and round, trying to find us out by the scent, but he tried in vain. At last, one of the men who had only an assaguay, said, 'Well, how long are we going to stay here, why don't you shoot?'

"'Well,' said Henrick, 'if you are so anxious to shoot, you may if you please. Here is my powder and shot belt, and my gun lies under the tree.' The man immediately descended from the tree, loaded the gun, and, approaching the rhinoceros, he fired and wounded it severely in the jaw. The animal was stunned and dropped on the spot. Thinking that it was dead, we all descended fearlessly and collected round it; and the man who had fired was very proud, and was giving directions to the others, when of a sudden, the animal

began to recover, and kicked with his hind-legs. Henrick told us all to run for our lives, and set us the example. The rhinoceros started up again, and singling out the unfortunate man who had got down and fired at it, roaring and snorting with rage, thundered after him.

“The man, perceiving that he could not outrun the beast, tried the same plan as the other hunter did when the rhinoceros charged him : stopping short, he jumped on one side, that the animal might pass him ; but the brute was not to be baulked a second time ; he caught the man on his horn under the left thigh, and cutting it open as if it had been done with an axe, tossed him a dozen yards up in the air. The poor fellow fell facing the rhinoceros, with his legs spread ; the beast rushed at him again, and ripped up his body from his stomach to almost his throat, and again tossed him in the air. Again he fell

heavily to the ground. The rhinoceros watched his fall, and running up to him, trod upon, and pounded him to a mummy. After this horrible tragedy, the beast limped off into a bush. Henrick then crept up to the bush; the animal dashed out again, and would certainly have killed another man, if a dog had not turned it. In turning short round upon the dog, the bone of its fore-leg, which had been half broken through by Henrick's first shot, snapped in two, and it fell, unable to recover itself, and was then shot dead."

"A very awkward customer, at all events," observed the Major. "I presume a leaden bullet would not enter?"

"No, it would flatten against most parts of his body. By the bye, I saw an instance of a rhinoceros having been destroyed by that cowardly brute the hyena."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, patience and perseverance on the

hyena's part effected the work. The rhinoceros takes a long while to turn round, and the hyena attacked him behind, biting him with his powerful jaws, above the joint of the hind-leg, and continued so to do, till he had severed all the muscles, and the animal, forced from pain to lie down, was then devoured as you may say alive from behind; the hyena still tearing at the same quarter, until he arrived at the vital parts. By the track which was marked with the blood of the rhinoceros, the hyena must have followed the animal for many miles, until the rhinoceros was in such pain that it could proceed no farther.—But if you are to hunt to-morrow at daybreak, it is time to go to sleep; so good night.”

At daybreak the next morning, they took a hasty meal, and started again for the plain. Swinton having to prepare his specimens, did not accompany them. There was a heavy fog on the plain when they arrived at it, and they

waited for a short time, skirting the south side of it, with the view of drawing the animals towards the encampment. At last the fog vanished, and discovered the whole country as before, covered with every variety of wild animals. But as their object was to obtain the eland antelope, they remained stationary for some time, seeking for those animals among the varieties which were scattered in all directions. At last Omrah, whose eyes were far keener than even the Hottentots', pointed out three at a distance, under a large acacia thorn. They immediately rode at a trot in that direction, and the various herds of quaggas, gnoos, and antelopes scoured away before them; and so numerous were they, and such was the clattering of hoofs, that you might have imagined that it was a heavy charge of cavalry. The objects of their pursuit remained quiet until they were within three hundred yards of them, and then they

set off at a speed, notwithstanding their heavy and unwieldy appearance, which for a short time completely distanced the horses. But this speed could not be continued, and the Major and Alexander soon found themselves rapidly coming up. The poor animals exerted themselves in vain; their sleek coats first turned to a blue colour, and then white with foam and perspiration, and at last they were beaten to a standstill, and were brought down by the rifles of our travellers, who then dismounted their horses, and walked up to the quarry.

“What magnificent animals!” exclaimed Alexander.

“They are enormous, certainly,” said the Major. “Look at the beautiful dying eye of that noble beast. Is it not speaking?”

“Yes, imploring for mercy, as it were, poor creature.”

“Well, these three beasts, that they say are

such good eating, weigh more than fifty antelopes."

"More than fifty springboks, I grant. Well, what shall we do now?"

"Let our horses get their wind again, and then we will see if we can fall in with some new game."

"I saw two or three antelopes of a very different sort from the sassabys and hartebeests, towards that rising ground. We will go that way as soon as the Hottentots come up and take charge of our game."

"Does Swinton want to preserve one of these creatures?"

"I believe not, they are so very bulky. He says we shall find plenty as we go on, and that he will not encumber the wagons with a skin, until we leave the Vaal river, and turn homewards. Now, Bremen and Omrah, come with us."

The Major and Alexander then turned their

horses' heads, and rode slowly towards the hill which they had noticed, and the antelopes that the Major had observed were now seen among the bushes which crowned the hill. Bremen said that he did not know the animals, and the Major was most anxious to obtain one to surprise Swinton with. As soon as they came within 200 yards of the bushes on the other side of which the antelopes were seen, the Major gave his horse to Omrah and advanced alone very cautiously, that he might bring one down with his rifle. He gained the bushes without alarming the animals, and the party left behind were anxiously watching his motions, expecting him every moment to fire, when the Major suddenly turned round and came back at a hurried pace.

"What is the matter?" said Alexander.

"Matter enough to stop my growth for all my life," replied the Major. "If ever my heart was in my mouth, it was just now. I

was advancing softly, and step by step, towards the antelopes, and was just raising my rifle to fire, when I heard something flapping the ground three or four yards before me. I looked down, and it was the tail of a lioness, which fortunately was so busy watching the antelopes, with her head the other way, that she did not perceive my being near her; whereupon I beat a retreat, as you have witnessed."

"Well, what shall we do now?"

"Wait a little till I have recovered my nerves," said the Major, "and then I'll be revenged upon her. Swinton is not here to preach prudence, and have a lion-hunt I will."

"With all my heart," replied Alexander. "Bremen, we are going to attack the lioness."

"Yes, Sir," said Bremen; "then we had better follow Cape fashion. We will back the horses towards her, and Omrah will hold them

while we will attack her. I think one only had better fire, so we keep two guns in reserve."

"You are right, Bremen," said Alexander. "Then you and I will reserve our fire, and the Major shall try his rifle upon her."

With some difficulty the horses were backed towards the bush, until the Major could again distinguish where the lioness lay, at about sixty paces' distance. The animal appeared still occupied with the game in front of her, watching her opportunity to spring, for her tail and hind-quarters were towards them. The Major fired, and the animal bounded off with a loud roar; while the antelopes flew away like the wind. The roar of the lioness was answered by a deep growl from another part of the bush, and immediately afterwards a lion bolted out, and bounded from the bushes across the plain, to a small mimosa grove about a quarter of a mile off.

"What a splendid animal," said Alexander ;

“look at his black mane, it almost sweeps the ground.”

“We must have him,” cried the Major, jumping on his horse.

Alexander, Bremen, and Omrah did the same, and they followed the lion, which stood at bay under the mimosas, measuring the strength of the party, and facing them in a most noble and imposing manner. It appeared, however, that he did not like their appearance, or was not satisfied with his own position, for as they advanced he retreated at a slow pace, and took up his position on the summit of a stony hill close by, the front of which was thickly dotted with low thorn bushes. The thorn bushes extended about 200 yards from where the lion stood, disdainfully surveying the party as they approached towards him, and appearing, with a conscious pride in his own powers, to dare them to approach him.

They dismounted from their horses as soon

as they arrived at the thorn bushes, and the Major fired. The rifle-ball struck the rock close to the lion, who replied with an angry growl. The Major then took the gun from Omrah and fired, and again the ball struck close to the animal's feet. The lion now shook his mane, gave another angry roar, and by the glistening of his eyes and the impatient switching of his tail, it was evident that he would soon become the attacking party.

“Load both your guns again,” said Alexander, “and then let me have a shot, Major.”

As soon as the Major's guns were loaded, Alexander took aim and fired. The shot broke the lion's fore-leg, which he raised up with a voice of thunder, and made a spring from the rock towards where our party stood.

“Steady now,” cried the Major to Bremen, at the same time handing his spare rifle to Alexander.

The rush of the angry animal was heard

through the bushes advancing nearer and nearer; and they all stood prepared for the encounter. At last, out the animal sprang, his mane bristling on end, his tail straight out, and his eyeballs flashing rage and vengeance. He came down upon the hind-quarters of one of the horses, which immediately started off, overthrowing and dragging Omrah to some distance. One of the lion's legs being broken, had occasioned the animal to roll off on the side of the horse, and he now remained on the ground ready for a second spring, when he received a shot through the back from Bremen, who stood behind him. The lion, with another dreadful roar, attempted to spring upon the Major, who was ready with his rifle to receive him; but the shot from Bremen had passed through his spine and paralyzed his hind-quarters, and he made the attempt in vain, a second and a third time throwing his fore-quarters up in the air, and then falling down

again, when a bullet from the Major passed through his brain. The noble beast sunk down gnawing the ground and tearing it with the claws of the leg which had not been wounded, and then, in a few seconds, breathed his last.

“I am glad that is over, Alexander,” said the Major; “it was almost too exciting to be pleasant.”

“It was very awful for the time, I must acknowledge,” replied Alexander; “what an enormous brute! I think I never saw such a magnificent skin.”

“It is yours by the laws of war,” said the Major.

“Nay,” replied Alexander, “it was you that gave him his *coup de grace*.”

“Yes, but if you had not broken his leg, he might have given some of us our *coup de grace*. No, no, the skin is yours. Now the horses are off, and we cannot send for the Hottentots. They have got rid of Omrah, who

is coming back with his shirt torn into tatters."

"The men will catch the horses and bring them here, depend upon it, Sir," said Bremen, "and then they can take off the skin."

"Well, if I am to have the lion's skin, I must have that of the lioness also, Major; so we must finish our day's hunting with forcing her to join her mate."

"Very good, with all my heart."

"Better wait till the men come with the horses, Sir," said Bremen; "three guns are too few to attack a lion—very great danger indeed."

"Bremen is right, Alexander, we must not run such a risk again. Depend upon it, if the animal's leg had not been broken, we should not have had so easy a conquest. Let us sit down quietly till the men come up."

In about half an hour, as Bremen had conjectured, the Hottentots, perceiving the horses

loose, and suspecting that something had happened, went in chase of them, and as soon as they had succeeded in catching them, brought them in the direction to which they had seen our travellers ride. They were not a little astonished at so small a party having ventured to attack a lion, and gladly prepared for the attack of the lioness. Three of the dogs having accompanied them, it was decided that they should be put into the bushes where the lioness was lying when the Major fired at her, so as to discover where she now was ; and leaving the lion for the present, they all set off for the first jungle.

The dogs could not find the lioness in the bushes, and it was evident that she had retreated to some other place ; and Swanevelt, who was an old lion-hunter, gave his opinion that she would be found in the direction near to where the lion was killed. They went therefore in that direction, and found that she

was in the clump of mimosas to which the lion had first retreated. The previous arrangement of backing the horses towards where she lay, was attempted, but the animals had been too much frightened in the morning by the lion's attack, to be persuaded. They reared and plunged in such a manner, as to be with difficulty prevented from breaking loose; it was therefore necessary to abandon that plan, and trust to themselves and their numbers. The clump of trees was surrounded by the party, and the dogs encouraged to go in, which they did, every now and then rushing back from the paws of the lioness. The Hottentots now fired into the clump at random, and their volleys were answered by the loud roars of the animal, which would not however shew herself, and half an hour was passed away in this manner.

At last she was perceived at one side of the jungle, by Swanevelt, who fired with effect,

for the animal gave a loud roar, and then bounded out, not attempting to rush upon any person, but to make her escape from her assailants. A volley was fired at her, and one shot took effect, for she fell with her head to the ground, and tumbled right over; but immediately after she recovered herself, and made off for the bushes, where she had been first discovered.

“She was hit hard that time, at all events,” said the Major.

“Yes, Sir,” said Bremen, “that was her death-shot, I should think; but she is not dead yet, and may give us a great deal of trouble.”

They followed her as fast as they could on foot, and the dogs were soon upon her again; the animal continued to roar, and always from the same spot, so that it was evident she was severely wounded. Alexander and the Major reserved their fire, and approached to where

the dogs were baying, not twenty yards from the jungle. Another roar was given, and suddenly the body of the lioness rushed through the air, right in the direction where they stood; she passed, however, between them, and when she reached the ground, she fell on her side quite dead. It was her last expiring effort, and she had died in the attempt. Alexander and the Major, who were both ready to fire, lowered their rifles when they perceived that she was dead.

“Well,” said the Major, “I will say that when I first saw her tail, I was more frightened than I was just now, when she made the spring; I was so taken by surprise.”

“I don’t doubt it. She is a very large animal, and will make a handsome companion to the lion. If we live and do well and get home to England again, I will have her stuffed along with him, and put them in the same case.”

“I trust you will, and that I shall come and see them,” replied the Major.

“I am sure I do, from my heart, my good fellow. I am very much pleased at our having killed both these beasts, without Swinton being with us, as he would have been persuading us to leave them alone.”

“And he would have done very right,” replied the Major. “We are two naughty boys, and shall be well scolded when we go back.”

“Which I vote we do now. I think we have done quite enough for to-day.”

“Yes, indeed,” replied the Major, mounting his horse; “enough to talk of all our lives. Now let us gallop home, and say nothing about having killed the lions until the Hot-tentots bring them to the caravan.”

CHAPTER IX.

“WELL, what sport have you had?” was Swinton’s first question when he was joined by Alexander and the Major. Replied the latter —“Pretty well; we saw an antelope quite new to us, which we tried very hard to shoot, but were prevented by an unexpected meeting with a lioness.” The Major then gave an account of his perceiving the tail of the lioness and his rapid retreat.

“I am very glad to hear that you were so prudent, Major; it would have been a very rash thing to attack a lioness with only three guns—so the antelopes escaped?”

“ Yes, but we have the elands, which you say are such good eating. Do we stay here any longer, or do we proceed up the river ? ”

“ You must ask Wilmot to decide that point,” said Swinton.

“ It is just as you please,” said Alexander ; “ but they say that the more you go to the northward, the more plentiful is the game.”

“ Yes, and we shall fall in with the giraffe,” said the Major, “ which is now the great object of my ambition ; I have killed the rhinoceros and elephant, and now I must have the giraffe ; they can kill the two first animals in India, but the other is only to be had in this country.”

“ And when you meet again your Indian friends, you wish to say that you have killed what they have not ? ”

“ Certainly ; what is the good of travelling so far if one has not something to boast of when one returns ? If I say, I have hunted and

killed the rhinoceros and elephant, they may reply to me, ‘So have we;’ but if I add the giraffe, that will silence them; don’t you observe, Swinton, I then remain master of the field? But here come the Hottentots with our game; come, Swinton, leave your preparations for a little while, and see what our morning’s sport has been.”

Swinton put aside the skin of the sassaby that he was cleaning, and walked with them to where the men were assembled, and was not a little surprised when he saw the skins and jaws of the lion and lioness. He was still more so when the Major recounted how they had been shot.

“You certainly have run a great risk,” said he, “and I am glad that you have been so successful. You are right in saying that I should have persuaded you not to attempt it; you are like two little boys who have taken advantage of the absence of their tutor to run into

mischief. However, I am glad that it has been done, as I now hope your desire to kill a lion will not again lead you into unnecessary danger."

"No, indeed," replied Alexander; "having once accomplished the feat, and being fully aware of the great risk that is run, we shall be more prudent in future."

"That is all I ask of you," said Swinton, "for I should be unhappy if we did not all three return safe to the Cape. I never saw a finer lion's skin; I will arrange it for you, that it shall arrive at the Cape in good order."

As usual, the afternoon was by the Hottentots devoted to eating as much as they could possibly contrive to get down their throats; the flesh of the eland was pronounced excellent by our travellers, and there was much more than they could possibly consume. The Hottentots were only allowed to bring a certain

quantity into the camp, that they might not attract the wild beasts. They would have brought it all in, although they never could have eaten it. The cattle were driven up in the evening, the fires lighted, and the night passed quietly away.

At daylight they turned the cattle out to graze for a couple of hours, and then yoked and proceeded on their journey, keeping as near as they could to the banks of the river. They saw many hippopotami, snorting and rising for a moment above the water, but they passed by them without attempting to shoot at them, as they did not wish to disturb the other game. As they advanced, the variety of flowers which were in bloom attracted the notice of Alexander, who observed—

“Does not this plain put you in mind of a Turkey carpet, Major; so gay with every variety of colour?”

“Yes, and as scentless,” replied the Major;

“ they are all very brilliant in appearance ; but one modest English violet is, to my fancy, worth them all.”

“ I agree with you,” replied Swinton ; “ but still you must acknowledge that this country is beautiful beyond description,—these grassy meads so spangled with numerous flowers, and so broken by the masses of grove and forest ! Look at these aloes blooming in profusion with their coral tufts—in England what would they pay for such an exhibition ?—and the crimson and lilac hues of these poppies and amaryllis blended together : neither are you just in saying that there is no scent in this gay parterre. The creepers which twine up those stately trees are very sweetly scented ; and how picturesque are the twinings of those vines upon the mimosas. I cannot well imagine the garden of Eden to have been more beautiful.”

“ And in another respect, there is a resem-

blance," said the Major, laughing ; " the serpent is in it."

" Yes, I grant that," replied Swinton.

" Well, I can feel no real pleasure without security ; if I am to be ever on the alert and turning my eyes in every direction that I may not tread upon a puff adder, or avoid the dart of the cobra capella, I can feel little pleasure in looking at the rich hues of those flowers which conceal them. As I said before, give me the violet and the rose of England, which I can pick and smell in security."

" I agree with you, Major," said Alexander ; " but," continued he, laughing, " we must make allowance for Swinton, as a naturalist. A puff adder has a charm for him, because it adds one more to the numerous specimens to be obtained ; and he looks upon these flowers as a botanist, rejoicing as he adds to his 'herbal, or gathers seeds and bulbs to load his wagon with. You might as well find fault

with a husbandman for rejoicing in a rich harvest."

"Or with himself, for being so delighted at the number and the variety of the animals which fall to his rifle," replied Swinton, smiling. "There I have you, Major."

"I grant it," replied the Major; "but what is that in the river—the back of a hippopotamus?"

"No, it is the back of an elephant, I should rather think; but the reeds are so high, that it is difficult to ascertain. There may be a herd bathing in the river, nothing more likely."

"Let us stop the caravan; the creaking of these wheels would drive away any thing," replied the Major; "we will then ride forward and see what it is. It is not more than half a mile from us."

"Be it so," replied Swinton. "Omrah, get the rifles, and tell Bremen to come here."

Now, Major, is it to be a regular hunt, or only a passing shot at them ; for I now perceive through my glass that they are elephants ? ”

“ Well, I think a passing shot will be best ; for if we are to hunt, we must send a party on the opposite side of the river, and that will be a tedious affair.”

“ I think myself it will be better to proceed,” said Swinton ; “ so, now then to scatter the enemy.”

They soon arrived at that part of the river, where they had at a distance discovered the elephants bathing, but as they approached, the high reeds prevented them from seeing the animals, although they could hear them plainly. At last, as they proceeded a little farther up the river, they discovered a female with its young one by its side ; the mother playing with its offspring, pouring water over it with its trunk, and now and then pressing it into the water, so as to compel

it to swim. They watched the motions of the animals for some time, and the Major first broke silence, by saying :

“I really have not the heart to fire at the poor creature ; its maternal kindness, and the playing of the little one, are too interesting. It would be cruel, now that we do not want meat, for an eland is to be killed every ten minutes.”

“I am glad to hear you say so,” replied Swinton. “Let us fire over them, and set them all in motion.”

“Agreed,” said the Major ; “this is to start them,” and he fired off his rifle in the air.

The noise that ensued was quite appalling ; the shrieks and cries of the elephants, and the treading down and rushing through the reeds, the splashing and floundering in the mud, for a few seconds, was followed by the bounding out of the whole herd on the opposite bank of

the river, tossing their trunks, raising up their ears, roaring wildly, and starting through the bushes into the forest from which they had descended. Two large males only were to be perceived among the whole herd, the rest were all females and their young ones, who scrambled away after the males, crowding together, but still occasionally looking behind after their young ones, till they had all disappeared in the forest, the cracking and crushing of the bushes in which were heard for many minutes afterwards.

“That was a splendid scene,” said Alexander.

“Yes, it was a living panorama, which one must come to Africa to behold.”

“I do not think that I shall ever become a true elephant hunter,” said the Major. “I feel a sort of repugnance to destroy so sagacious an animal, and a degree of remorse when one lies dead. At the same time, if

once accustomed to the fearful crashing and noise attending their movements, I do not consider them very dangerous animals to pursue."

"Not if people are cool and collected. We have had several famous elephant hunters among the Dutch farmers. I remember that one of them, after a return from a successful chase, made a bet, that he would go up to a wild elephant, and pluck eight hairs out of his tail. He did so and won his bet, for the elephant cannot see behind him, and is not very quick in turning round. However, a short time afterwards he made the same attempt, and being fool-hardy from success, the animal was too quick for him, and he was crushed to death."

Bremen now came up to them, to say that there was a party of people to the eastward, and he thought that there was a wagon. On examination with their telescopes, they found

that such was the case; and our travellers turned their horses' heads in the direction, to ascertain who they might be, leaving the caravan to proceed by the banks of the river. In about an hour, they came close to them, and Swinton immediately recognized them as Griquas, or mixed European and Hottentot races. Of course, they met in the most friendly manner, and the Griquas said that they had come to hunt the elephant, eland, and other animals; the former for their ivory, and the latter for their flesh. Their wagon, which was a very old one, was loaded with flesh, cut up in long strips, and hanging to dry; and they had a great many hundred-weight of ivory, which they had already collected. As soon as our travellers had explained to them their own motions, the Griquas said that they would bring their wagon down in the evening, and encamp with them. Our travellers then returned to the caravan.

As they promised, the Griquas joined them late in the afternoon. They were a party of sixteen; all stout fellows, and armed with the long guns used by the Dutch boors. They said that they had been two months from Griqua town, and were thinking of returning very soon, as their wagon was loaded to the extent that it would bear. The Major stating that it was their intention to hunt the giraffe, the Griquas informed them that they would not find the animal to the southward of the Vaal river, and that they would have to cross over into the territories of the king Moselekatsee, who ruled over the Bechuana country, to the northward of the river; and that it would be very dangerous to attempt so to do without his permission; indeed, that there would be danger in doing so, even with it.

“Do you know any thing of this person, Swinton?”

“Yes, I have heard of him, but I did not

know that he had extended his conquests so low down as to the Vaal river."

"Who is he?"

"You have heard of Chaka, the king of the Zoolus, who conquered the whole country, as far as Port Natal to the eastward?"

"Yes," replied Alexander; "we have heard of him."

"Well, Moselekatsee was a chief of two or three tribes, who, when hard pressed by his enemies, took refuge with Chaka, and became one of his principal warrior chiefs. After a time he quarrelled with Chaka, about the distribution of some cattle they had taken, and aware that he had no mercy to expect from the tyrant, he revolted from him with a large force, and withdrew to the Bechuana country. There he conquered all the tribes, enrolled them in his own army, and gradually became as formidable as Chaka himself. In the arrangements of his army, he followed

the same plans as Chaka, and has now become a most powerful monarch, and they do say, is almost as great a tyrant and despot as Chaka himself was. I believe that the Griquas are right, in saying there would be danger in passing through his dominions without his permission."

"But," said Alexander, "I suppose if we send a message to him and presents, there will be no difficulty?"

"Perhaps not, except that our caravan may excite his cupidity, and he may be induced to delay us, to obtain possession of its contents. However, we had better put this question to the Griquas, who probably can answer it better."

The Griquas, on being questioned, replied, that the best plan would be, to send a message to the Matabili capital, where Moselekatsee resided, requesting permission to hunt in the country, and begging the monarch to send

some of his principal men, to receive the presents which they had to offer;—that it would not take long to receive an answer, as it would only be necessary to deliver the message to the first officer belonging to Moselekatsee, at the advanced posts. That officer would immediately despatch a native with the message, who would arrive much sooner than any one they could send themselves. Bremen and three other Hottentots offered to take the message, if our travellers wished it; this was agreed to, and that afternoon they mounted their horses, and crossed the river. By the advice of the Griquas, the camp was shifted about a mile farther up the river, on account of the lions.

The weather now threatened a change; masses of clouds accumulated, but were again dispersed. The next day, the weather was again threatening; thunder pealed in the distant mountains, and the forked lightning flew

in every direction; but the rain, if any, was expended on the neighbouring hills.

A strong wind soon blew up so as to try the strength of the canvas awnings of their wagons, and they found it difficult to keep their fires in at night. They had encamped upon a wide plain covered with high grass, and abounding with elands and other varieties of antelopes: here they remained for five days, waiting the reply of the king of the Matabili, and went out every day to procure game. On the Sabbath-day, after they had as usual performed divine service, they observed a heavy smoke to windward, which, as the wind was fresh, soon bore down upon them and inconvenienced them much.

Swanevelt stated that the high grass had been fired by some means or another, and as it threatened to come down upon the encampment, the Hottentots and Griquas were very busy beating down the grass round about

them. When they had so done, they went to windward some hundred yards and set fire to the grass in several places; the grass burnt quickly, till it arrived at where it had been beaten down, and the fire was extinguished. That this was a necessary precaution was fully proved, for as the night closed in, the whole country for miles was on fire, and the wind bore the flames down rapidly towards them.

The sky was covered with clouds, and the darkness of the night made the flames appear still more vivid: the wind drove them along with a loud crackling noise, sweeping over the undulating ground, now rising and now disappearing in the hollows, the whole landscape lighted up for miles.

As our travellers watched the progress of the flames and every now and then observed a terrified antelope spring from its lair, and appearing like a black figure in a phantasmagoria, suddenly the storm burst upon them

and the rain poured down in torrents, accompanied with large hailstones and thunder and lightning. The wind was instantly lulled, and after the first burst of the storm a deathlike silence succeeded to the crackling of the flames. A deluge of rain descended, and in an instant every spark of the conflagration was extinguished, and the pitchy darkness of the night was unbroken by even a solitary star.

The next morning was bright and clear, and, after breakfast, they perceived the Hottentots who had been sent on their message to Moselekatsee, on the opposite bank of the river accompanied by three of the natives ; they soon crossed the river and came to the encampment. The natives, who were Matabili, were tall, powerful men, well proportioned and with regular features ; their hair was shorn, and surmounted with an oval ring attached to the scalp, and the lobe of their left ears was perforated with such a large hole, that it contained

a small gourd, which was used as a snuff-box. Their dress was a girdle of strips of catskins, and they each carried two javelins and a knobbed stick for throwing.

They were heartily welcomed by our travelers, who placed before them a large quantity of eland steaks, and filled their boxes with snuff. As soon as they had finished eating, and drawn up a large quantity of snuff into their nostrils, they explained through the Griquas, who could speak their language, that they had come from the greatest of all monarchs in the world, Moselekatsee, who wished to know who the strangers were, what they wanted of him, and what presents they had brought.

Swinton, who was spokesman, returned for answer that they were hunters, and not traders; that they had come to see the wonders of the country belonging to so great a monarch, and that hearing that his majesty had animals in his country which were not to be found else-

where, they wanted permission to kill some, to shew upon their return to their own people what a wonderful country it was that belonged to so great a monarch ;— that they had brought beads and copper wire, and knives, and boxes for making fire, and snuff and tobacco, all of which they wished to present to the great monarch ; a part as soon as they had received his permission to enter his territory, and another part when they were about to leave it. A handsome present of the above articles was then produced, and the messengers of the king having surveyed the articles with some astonishment, declared that their king would feel very glad when he saw all these things, and that he had desired them to tell our travellers that they might come into his dominions with safety, and kill all the animals that they pleased. That his majesty had commanded one of them to remain with the party, and that as soon as he

had received his presents, he would send a chief to be answerable for their safety. The Matabili then packed up the articles presented, and two of them set off at full speed on their return to the king. The third, who remained, assured our travellers that they might cross the river and enter the Matabili country as soon as they pleased.

A debate now ensued as to whether they should go with their whole force or not. The Matabili had informed them that in three days' journey they would fall in with the giraffe, which they were in search of, and as there would be some risk in crossing the river, and they had every reason to expect that it would soon rise, the question was whether it would be prudent to take over even one of the wagons. The opinion of the Griquas was asked, and it was ultimately arranged that they should take over Alexander's wagon only, with fifteen pair of oxen, and that some of the Gri-

quas should accompany them, with Swanevelt, Omrah, and Mahommed ;—that Bremen and the Hottentots should remain where they were, with the other three wagons and the rest of the Griquas, until our travellers should return.

This arrangement was not at all disagreeable to the Hottentots, who did not much like the idea of entering the Matabili country, and were very happy in their present quarters, as they were plentifully provided with good meat. Alexander's wagon was therefore arranged so as to carry the bedding and articles they might require, all other things being removed to the other wagons. Their best oxen were selected and eight of the fleetest of their horses, and on the following morning, having ascertained from the Matabili the best place to cross the river, our travellers set off, and in an hour were on the other side.

There was no change in the country during the first day's journey ; the same variety and

brilliancy of flowers were everywhere to be seen. The eland and the other antelopes were plentiful, and they were soon joined by parties of the natives, who requested them to shoot the animals for them, which they did in quantities even sufficient to satisfy them. Indeed if they found them troublesome, our travellers had only to bring down an eland, and the natives were immediately left behind that they might devour the animal, which was done in an incredibly short space of time. The Matabili who had conducted them proved to be a chief, and if he gave any order it was instantly obeyed; so that our travellers had no trouble with the natives except their begging and praying for snuff, which was incessant both from the men and women. Neither did they fear any treachery from the Matabili king, as they were well armed, and the Griquas were brave men, and the superiority of their weapons made them a match for a large force.

Every precaution, however, was taken when they halted at night, which they invariably did in the centre of an open plain, to prevent any surprise; and large fires were lighted round the wagon.

They travelled on in this way for two days more, when in the evening they arrived at a large plain sprinkled with mimosa-trees, and abutting on the foot of a low range of hills. The Matabili told them that they would find the giraffes on these plains, and the Major, who was very anxious, kept his telescope to his eye, looking round in every direction till nightfall, but did not succeed in descrying any of the objects of his search. They retired that night with anxious expectation for the following morning, when they anticipated that they should fall in with these remarkable animals. Their guns were examined and every precaution taken, and having lighted their fires and set the watch, they went to bed; and after commending themselves to the care of Providence, were soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER X.

WITH the exception of three lions coming very near to the encampment and rousing up the Griquas, nothing occurred during the night. In the morning they yoked the oxen and had all the horses saddled ready for the chase, but they were disappointed for nearly the whole day; as, although they saw a variety of game, no giraffe appeared in sight. In the afternoon, as they passed by a clump of mimosas, they were charged by a rhinoceros, which nearly threw down Alexander's best horse, but a volley from the Griquas laid him prostrate. It was a very large animal, but not of the black or ferocious sort, being what is

termed the white rhinoceros. Within the last two days they had also observed that the gnoo was not of the same sort as the one which they had seen so long, but a variety which Swinton told them was called the brindled gnoo; it was, however, in every other respect the same animal, as to its motions and peculiarities. Towards the evening, the Matabili warrior who accompanied them pointed to a mimosa at a distance and made signs to the Major that there was a giraffe.

“I cannot see him,—do you, Alexander?” said the Major; “he points to that mimosa with the dead stump on the other side of it, there. Yes, it is one, I see the stump, as I called it, move; it must be the neck of the animal. Let loose the dogs, Swanevelt,” cried the Major, starting off at full speed, and followed by Alexander and Omrah with the spare horse. In a minute or two the giraffe was seen to get clear of the mimosa, and then

set off in an awkward, shambling kind of gallop ; but awkward as the gallop appeared, the animal soon left the Major behind. It sailed along with incredible velocity, its long swan-like neck keeping time with its legs, and its black tail curled above its back.

“ Push on, Alexander,” cried the Major ; “ if ever there were seven-league boots, that animal has a pair of them on. He goes like the wind ; but he cannot keep it up long, depend upon it, and our horses are in capital condition.”

Alexander and the Major were now neck and neck, close to each other, at full speed, when of a sudden, the Major’s horse stumbled and fell upon an ostrich, which was sitting on her nest ; Alexander’s horse also tumbled, and followed after the Major, and there they were, horses and riders, all rolling together among the ostrich-eggs ; while the ostrich gained her legs, and ran off as fast as the giraffe.

As soon as they had got on their legs again, and caught the bridles of their horses, they looked round, but could not distinguish the giraffe, which was out of sight among the mimosa-trees; while Omrah was very busy picking up their rifles, and laughing in a very disrespectful manner. The Major and Alexander soon joined in the laugh. No bones were broken, and the horses had received no injury. All they had to do was to return to the caravan, looking very foolish.

“Your first essay in giraffe-hunting has been very successful,” said Swinton, laughing, as they came up to him.

“Yes, we both threw very pretty summersets, did we not?” said Alexander. “However, we have got some ostrich-eggs for supper, and that is better than nothing. It will soon be dark, so we had better encamp for the night, had we not?”

“I was about to propose it,” said Swinton.

“ Did you ever hunt the giraffe, Swinton ? ” inquired Alexander, as they were making their supper on roasted ostrich-eggs ; each of them holding one between his knees, and dipping out with a large spoon.

“ Never,” replied Swinton ; “ I have often seen them in Namaqua Land, but never killed one. I remember, however, a circumstance connected with the giraffe, which would have been incredible to me, if I had not seen the remains of the lion. You are well aware how long and strong are the thorns of the mimosa (or Kamel tree, as the Dutch call it, from the giraffe browsing upon it,) and how the boughs of these trees lie like an umbrella, close upon one another. A native chief informed me, that he witnessed a lion attacking a giraffe. The lion always springs at the head or neck, and seizes the animal by that part, riding him, as it were. The giraffe sets off at full speed with its enemy, and is so powerful

as often to get rid of him; for I have seen giraffes killed, which had the marks of the lion's teeth and claws upon them. In this instance the lion made a spring, but the giraffe at that very moment turning sharp round, the lion missed his aim, and by the blow it received was tossed in the air, so that he fell upon the boughs of the mimosa on his back. The boughs were not only compact enough to bear his weight, but the thorns that pierced through his body, were so strong as to hold the enormous animal where he lay. He could not disengage himself; and they pointed out to me the skeleton on the boughs of the tree, as a corroboration of the truth of the story."

"It does really approach to the marvellous," observed the Major; "but as you say, seeing is believing. I trust that we shall be more fortunate to-morrow."

"I have gained a piece of information from

Swanevelt," said Swinton, "which makes me very anxious that we should leave this as soon as possible; which is, that the Matabili king had no idea that we had Griquas in our company, and still less that we were to come into his country with only the Griquas as attendants. You are not perhaps aware that Moselekatsee is the deadly enemy of the Griquas, with whom he has had several severe conflicts, and that we are not very safe on that account?"

"Why did not the Griquas say so?" replied Alexander.

"Because they do not care for the Matabili, and I presume are glad to come into the country, that they may know something of it, in case of their making an attack upon it. Depend upon it, as soon as the king hears of it, we shall be looked upon as spies, and he may send a party to cut us off."

"Have you said any thing to the Griquas?"

“Yes, and they laughed, and said that they should not care if we went right up to the principal town, where Moselekatsee resides.”

“Well, they are bold enough, and so far are good travelling companions; but we certainly did not come here to fight,” observed the Major. “But does the Matabili with us know that they are Griquas?”

“He did not; he supposed that they were Cape people whom we had brought with us; but he has found it out by the Hottentots, I suppose. Swanevelt says, that the very first body of Matabili that we fell in with, he sent a runner off immediately, I presume to give the information. I think therefore that the sooner we can get away the better.”

“Well, I agree with you, Swinton,” replied Alexander. “We will try for the giraffe to-morrow, and when the Major has had the satisfaction of killing one, we will retrace our

steps ; for should we be attacked, it will be impossible to defend ourselves long against numbers. So now to bed."

They rose early the next morning, and leaving the wagon where it was, again proceeded on horseback in search of the giraffes. They rode at a slow pace for four or five miles, before they could discover any. At last a herd of them were seen standing together browsing on the leaves of the mimosa. They made a long circuit to turn them, and drive them towards the camp, and in this they succeeded. The animals set off at their usual rapid pace, but did not keep it up long, as there were several not full grown among them, which could not get over the ground so fast as the large male of the preceding day. After a chase of three miles, they found that the animals' speed was rapidly decreasing, and they were coming up with them. When within a hundred yards, Alexander fired, and wounded a female,

which was in the rear. The Major pushed on with the dogs, after a large male, and it stopped at bay under a mimosa, kicking most furiously at the dogs. The Major levelled his rifle, and brought the animal down with his first shot. It rose again, however, and for a hundred yards went away at a fast pace; but it again fell to rise no more. The female which Alexander had wounded, received another shot, and was then also prostrated.

“I have killed a *giraffe*,” said the Major, standing by the side of the one he had killed. “It has been a long way to travel, and there have been some dangers to encounter for the sake of performing this feat; but we have all our follies, and are eager in the pursuit of just as great trifles through life; so that in this I am not perhaps more foolish than the rest of mankind. I have obtained my wishes—I have killed a giraffe; and now I don’t care how soon we go back again.”

“Nor I,” replied Alexander; “for I can say with you, when we arrive in England, I too have killed a giraffe; so you will not be able to boast over me. By Swinton’s account, if we stay here much longer, we shall have to kill Matabili, which I am not anxious to do; therefore, I now say with you, I don’t care how soon we go back to the Cape.”

As they were not more than two miles from the wagon, they rode back, and sent the Griquas to bring in the flesh of the animals; Swinton not caring about the skins, as he had already procured some in Namaqua Land, and the weight of them would be so very great for the wagon. On their return, they had some conversation with the Griquas, who candidly acknowledged that it was very likely that the Matabili king would attempt to cut them off, although they appeared not at all afraid of his making the attempt. They, however, readily consented to return the next

morning. That night, a messenger arrived to the Matabili chief who was escorting them. What was the communication, of course our travellers could not tell; but their suspicions were confirmed by the behaviour of the man. When he found that, on the following morning, they yoked the oxen and retraced their steps, he begged them not to go, but to advance into the interior of the country, where they would find plenty of game; told them that the king would be very angry if they left so soon; and if he did not see them, his heart would be very sad. But our travellers had made up their mind, and travelled back during the whole of that day. The Matabili despatched the messenger who had come to him, and who again set off at all speed; at night he urged our travellers not to go back, saying that the king would be very angry with him. But as the Griquas were now equally convinced that treachery was intended, they

paid no attention to the Matabili chief, and continued their route, shooting elands by the way for their sustenance. Late in the evening of the third day they found themselves on the borders of the Vaal River. It was still two hours before dark, and as the Matabili pressed them to encamp where they were, they were satisfied that they had better not, and therefore they forded the river, and rejoined the caravan, under charge of Bremen, just as night closed in.

The Griquas said, that from the Matabili wishing them to remain on the other side of the river, they were persuaded that a force would arrive during that night or the following morning, and that it would be necessary to be on the look-out; although probably the enemy would not venture to attack them without further orders, now that they were no longer in Moselekatsee's dominions. Every preparation was therefore made: the Griquas

and Hottentots were all supplied with ammunition, and mustered with their guns in their hands. The wagons were arranged, the fires lighted, and four men were posted as sentinels round the encampment. What added still more to their suspicions, was, that about an hour after dark, the Matabili chief was not to be found.

“My opinion is,” said the Major, “that we ought to steal a march upon them. Our oxen are in excellent condition, and may travel till to-morrow evening without feeling it. Let us yoke and be off at once, now that it is dark. The moon will rise about two o’clock in the morning; but before that, the wagons will be twelve or fifteen miles off. Alexander and I, with Bremen, will remain here with our horses, and wait till the moon rises, to see if we can discover any thing; and we can easily join the wagons by daybreak. We will keep the fires up, to allow them to

suppose that we are still encamped, that they may not pursue."

"And also to keep off the lions," observed Alexander; "which are not enemies to be despised."

"I think it is a very good plan; but why not have more men with you? We have plenty of horses, and so have the Griquas."

"Well then, let us talk to the Griquas."

The Griquas approved of the plan; and having their own horses, six of them agreed to remain with Alexander and the Major, and Swanevelt and two more of the Hottentots were also mounted to remain; which made a force of twelve men, well mounted and well armed. The remainder of the caravan yoked the oxen to the wagons, and, under the direction of Swinton, set off in a southerly direction, across the desert, instead of going by the banks of the Vaal River, as before.

This had been arranged previously to any

expected attack from the Matabili, as it would considerably shorten the distance on returning, although they knew that they would find much difficulty in procuring water for a few days. After the caravan had departed, it was found that Omrah had helped himself to a horse and a gun, and had remained in the camp; but as he was always useful, his so doing was passed over without notice. In half an hour, the wagons were out of sight, and the noise of their wheels was no longer to be heard.

They fastened their horses in the centre of the fires, and sat down by them till the moon rose, when they directed their eyes to the opposite bank of the river; but, for some time nothing was discovered, to confirm their suspicions. When the moon was about an hour high, they perceived a body of men coming down towards the banks, and the moon shone upon their shields, which were white. As soon

as they arrived at the bank of the river, they all sat down, without making any noise. Shortly afterwards, another body, with dark-coloured shields, made their appearance, who came down and joined the first.

“We were not wrong in our suspicions, at all events,” said the Major; “I should say that there are not less than a thousand men in these two parties which have already appeared. Now, what shall we do? Shall we remain here, or shall we be off, and join the wagons?”

“I really can hardly decide which would be the best,” replied Alexander; “let us have a consultation with Bremen and the Griquas.”

“If we were to go away now,” said Bremen, “the fires would soon be out, and they might suspect something, and come over to reconnoitre. When they found that we were gone, they would perhaps follow us, and overtake the wagons; but if we remain here, and keep the fires up till daybreak, the

wagons will have gained so much more distance."

The Griquas were of the same opinion ; and it was decided that they would remain there till daybreak, and then set off.

" But," said Alexander, " shall we leave this before they can see us, or allow them to see us ? "

The Griquas said, that it would be better that the enemy should see them, as then they would know that the fires had been kept up to deceive them, and that the wagons were probably a long way off.

This having been agreed upon, a careful watch was kept upon the enemy during the remainder of the night. Although the moon had discovered the approach of the Matabili to the party, the spot where the camp had been pitched was in the shade, so that from the opposite side of the river only the fires could be distinguished. A little before dawn, some

one was heard approaching, and they were all prepared to fire, when they discovered that it was Omrah, who, unknown to them, had crawled down to the banks of the river, to reconnoitre the enemy.

Omrah, who was out of breath with running, stated that some of the Matabili were crossing the river, and that six had landed on this side, before he came up to give the information. He pointed to a clump of trees, about three hundred yards off, and said that they had gone up in that direction, and were probably there by that time.

“Then we had better saddle and mount,” said the Major, “and ride away gently to the wood on this side of the camp. We shall then be able to watch their motions without being seen.”

This advice was good, and approved by all. They led out their horses without noise, and as soon as they had done so, they went

back, and threw more fuel on the fires. They then retreated to the wood, which was about the same distance from the camp, on the other side, as the clump of trees where the Matabili were secreted.

They had hardly concealed themselves, before the Matabili in the clump, surprised at not seeing the awnings of the wagons, and suspecting that they had been deceived, came out from their ambuscade ; first crawling on all-fours, and as they arrived at the camp, and found only fires burning, rising up one after another. After remaining about a minute in consultation, two of the party were sent back to the river to communicate this intelligence to the main body, while the others searched about in every direction. Alexander, with the Major and their party, remained where they were, as it was their intention to cross through the wood, until they came to the open ground, about a quarter of a

mile to the southward, and then shew themselves to the enemy, before they went off to join the wagons.

In a few minutes it was daylight, and they now perceived that the whole body of the Matabili were crossing the river.

"They intend to pursue us, then," said Alexander.

Omrah now pointed to the side of the river, in the direction which the wagons had travelled, when they came up by its banks, saying, "When go away—ride that way first—same track wagon go that way back—same way wagon come."

"The boy is right," said the Major; "when we start from the wood, we will keep by the river side, in the track by which the wagons came; and when we are concealed from them by the hills or trees, we will then start off to the southward after the wagons."

"I see," replied Alexander; "they will

probably take the marks of the wagon-wheels coming here, for those of the wagons going away, and will follow them; presuming, as we go that way, that our wagons have gone also. But here they come up the banks; it is time for us to be off."

"Quite time," said the Major; "so now let us shew ourselves, and then trust to our heels."

The Matabili force was now within four hundred yards of the camp. It was broad daylight; and, with their white and red shields, and short spears in their hands, they presented a very formidable appearance.

There was no time to be lost, so the party rode out of the end of the wood nearest the river, and, as soon as they made their appearance, were received by a yell from the warriors, who dashed forward in the direction where they stood. The Major had directed that no one should fire, as he and Alexander did not wish that any blood should be shed unneces-

sarily. They therefore waved their hands, and turning their horses' heads, galloped off by the banks of the river, keeping in the tracks made by the wagons when they came up.

As soon as they had galloped a quarter of a mile, they pulled up, and turned their horses' heads to reconnoitre. They perceived that the Matabili force was pursuing them at the utmost speed: but, as they had no horsemen, that speed was of course insufficient to overtake the well-mounted party in advance. As soon as they were near, our party again galloped off and left them behind. Thus they continued for four or five miles, the Matabili force pursuing them, or rather following the tracks of the wagons, when they observed a belt of trees before them about a mile off; this the Major considered as a good screen to enable them to alter their course without being perceived by the enemy. They therefore galloped forward, and as soon as they were hidden by the trees, turned

off in a direction by which they made certain to fall in with the track which the wagons had made on their departure during the night.

They had ridden about two miles, still concealed in the wood, when they had the satisfaction of perceiving the Matabili force still following at a rapid pace the tracks of the wagons on the river side. Having watched them for half an hour, as they now considered that all was safe, they again continued their course, so as to fall in with the wagons.

“I think we are clear of them now,” said the Major; “they have evidently fallen into the trap proposed by that clever little fellow Omrah.”

“He is a very intelligent boy,” observed Alexander, “and, travelling in this country, worth his weight in gold.”

“I wish Swinton would make him over to me,” said the Major; “but Alexander, do you observe what a change there is already in the country?”

“ I do indeed,” replied Alexander ; “ and all ahead of us it appears to be still more sterile and bare.”

“ Yes, when you leave the rivers, you leave vegetation of all kinds almost. There is no regular rainy season at all here, Swinton says ; we may expect occasional torrents of rain during three months, but they are very uncertain ; the mountains attract the greater portion of the rain, and sometimes there will not be a shower on the plains for the whole year.”

“ How far shall we have to travel before we fall in with water again ?” inquired Alexander.

“ Swinton says that there may be water in a river about sixty miles from where we started last night ; if not, we shall have to proceed about thirty miles further, to the Gykoup or Vet River. After that we shall have to depend for many days upon the water we may find in the holes, which, as the season is now coming on, may probably be filled by the rain.”

Alexander and his party rode for seven or eight miles before they fell in with the tracks of the caravan; they then pulled up their jaded horses, and proceeded at a more leisurely pace, so that it was not till late in the evening that they discovered the wagons at some distance, having passed the dry bed of Salt River ahead of them. During the whole day their horses had had neither food nor water, and the animals were much exhausted when they came up with the wagons. The oxen also were fatigued with so long a journey, having made nearly fifty miles since they started the evening before.

The country was now stony and sterile; a little vegetation was to be found here and there, but not sufficient to meet the wants of the animals, and water there was none. During the day but little game had been seen; a few zebras and ostriches only; all other varieties had disappeared. There was of course no

wood to light the fires round the encampment: a sufficiency for cooking their victuals had been thrown into the wagons, and two sheep were killed to supply a supper for so numerous a party. But the absence of game also denoted the absence of lions, and they were not disturbed during the night. In the morning the Griquas parted company with them, on the plea that their oxen and horses were in too poor a condition to pass over the desert, and that they must make a direct course for the Vaal River and return by its banks.

Our travellers gave them a good supply of ammunition, the only thing that they wished for, and the Griquas yoking their oxen to the crazy old wagon, set off in a westerly direction.

The route of the caravan was now directed more to the south-west, and they passed over an uninterrupted plain strewed with small land-tortoises, and covered with a profusion of the

gayest flowers. About noon, after a sultry journey of nine hours, they fortunately arrived at a bog, in which they found a pool of most fetid water, which nothing but necessity could have compelled either them or the exhausted animals to drink. Near this pool in the desert they found several wild animals, and they obtained three gnoos for a supply of provision: the little wood that they had in the wagon for fuel was all used up in cooking their supper.

A heavy dew fell during the night, and in the morning, before the sun rose, they were enveloped in a thick fog. As the fog dispersed, they perceived herds of quaggas in all directions, but at a great distance. They again yoked the oxen and proceeded on their journey; the country was now covered with herbage and flowers of every hue, and looked like a garden.

“How strange that the ground should be

covered with flowers where there is no rain or water to be found," observed Alexander.

"It is the heavy dews of the night which support them," said Swinton, "and perhaps the occasional rains which fall."

A line of trees to the southward told them that they were now approaching an unnamed river, and the tired oxen quickened their pace; but on their arrival they found that the bed of the river was dry, and not even a drop of water was to be found in the pools. The poor animals, which had been unyoked, snuffed and smelt at the wet, damp earth, and licked it with their tongues, but could obtain no relief. The water which they had had in the casks for their own drinking was now all gone; and there were no hopes of obtaining any till they arrived at the Vet River, at least twenty-five to thirty miles distant. Two of the oxen lay down to rise no more; the countenances of the Hottentots were dejected and

sullen, and our travellers felt that their situation was alarming.

While they were still searching and digging for water, the sky became overcast, thunder and lightning were seen and heard in the distance, and the clouds came rolling in volumes towards them. Hope was now in every face; they already anticipated the copious showers which were to succeed; their eyes ever fixed upon the coming storm. Even the cattle appeared to be conscious that relief was at hand. All that day the clouds continued to gather and the lightning to gleam. Night closed in, but the rain had not yet fallen; the wind rose up, and in less than an hour all the clouds had passed away, the stars shone out brightly, and they were left in a state of suffering and disappointment.

CHAPTER XI.

As our travellers were sitting together, each occupied with his own melancholy thoughts after the dispersion of the clouds and the anticipated relief, the Major said—

“ It is useless our remaining here, we must all perish if we do not proceed, and it would be better for us to yoke and travel by night; the animals will bear the journey better, and the people will not be so inclined to brood over their misfortunes when on the march as when thus huddled together here, and communicating their lamentations to dishearten each other. It is now nine o'clock; let us yoke and push on as far as we can.”

“ I agree with you, Major,” said Alexander ;
“ what do you say, Swinton ? ” .

“ I am convinced that it will be the best plan, so let us rouse up the people at once. There is the roar of a lion at some distance, and we have no fires to scare them off.”

The creaking of the wagon-wheels will be better than nothing,” replied the Major.

The Hottentots were roused and the orders given to yoke : the poor fellows were all sound asleep, for a Hottentot, when he hungers or thirsts, seeks refuge from all his miseries in sleep. The oxen were yoked, and they proceeded ; but hardly had they gone a mile when the roar of three or four lions, close upon them, caused such alarm to the horses and the oxen which were not yoked, that they started off in a full gallop in a northerly direction.

Alexander, the Major, and Omrah, who were the best mounted, immediately set off in pursuit of them, desiring Swinton to proceed with

the caravan, and they would drive on the cattle and join him. They galloped off as well as the horses could gallop, and perceived the stray horses and oxen still at full speed, as if they were chased by the lions. They followed in the direction, but it was now so dark that they were guided only by the clatter of their hoofs and their shoes in the distance; and after a chase of four or five miles, they had lost all vestiges of them, and pulled up their panting steeds.

“We may as well go back again,” said Alexander, “the animals must have made a circuit.”

“I suppose so,” said the Major; “but my horse trembles so that I had better dismount for a little while that he may recover himself; indeed, so had you too and Omrah, for the animals are completely worn out.”

“The clouds are rising again,” said Alexander; “I trust that we may not be disappointed a second time.”

“Yes, and there is lightning again in the horizon—may the Almighty help us in our distress,” exclaimed the Major.

The horses, exhausted from want of water, continued to pant so fearfully, that it was nearly half an hour before they ventured to mount, that they might return to the caravan. In the meantime the heavens had become wholly obscured by the clouds, and there was every prospect of a heavy shower; at last a few drops did fall.

“Thank God!” exclaimed Alexander, as he lifted his face up to the heavens, to feel the drops as they fell. “Now let us return.”

They mounted their horses and set off, but the stars were no longer visible to guide them, and they proceeded on at a slow pace, uncertain whether they were right or wrong. This they cared little about; their thoughts were upon the coming rain, which they so anxiously awaited. For more than three hours, they

were tantalized by the lightning flashing and the thunder pealing, every moment expecting the flood-gates of the heavens to be opened; but, as before, they were doomed to disappointment. Before the morning dawned, the clouds had again retreated, and when the sky was clear, they found by the stars, that their horses' heads were turned to the northward and eastward.

They altered their course in silence, for they were worn out and despondent; they suffered dreadfully from thirst, and it was pitiable to see the tongues of the poor horses hanging out of their mouths. Day dawned, and there were no signs of the caravan. A thick vapour was rising from every quarter, and they hoped that when it cleared up, they would be more fortunate; but no, there was the same monotonous landscape, the same carpet of flowers without perfume. The sun was now three hours high, and the heat was intense; their tongues clove

to the roofs of their mouths, while still they went on over flowery meads; but neither forest or pool, nor any trees which might denote the bed of the river, caught their earnest gaze.

"This is dreadful," said Alexander, at last; speaking with difficulty.

"We are lost, that is certain," said the Major; "but we must trust in God."

"Yes, we may now say Lord help us, or we perish," replied Alexander.

At this moment, little Omrah, who had been behind, rode up to them, and offered them one of the Hottentot's pipes, which he had lighted; saying, "Smoke,—not feel so bad." Alexander took it, and after a few whiffs, found that it had the effect of producing a little saliva, and he handed it to the Major, who did the same, and felt immediate relief.

They continued to walk their horses in a

southerly direction ; but the heat was now so great, that it became almost insufferable, and at last the horses stood still. They dismounted, and drove their horses slowly before them over the glowing plain ; and now the mirage deluded and tantalized them in the strangest manner. At one time, Alexander pointed with delight (for he could not speak) to what he imagined to be the wagons ; they pushed on, and found that it was a solitary quagga, magnified thus by the mirage. Sometimes they thought that they saw lakes of water in the distance, and hastened on to them ; and then they fancied they were close to rivers and islands, covered with luxuriant foliage, but still were doomed to disappointment ; as all was the result of the highly rarefied air, and the refraction of the sun's rays on the sultry plain. What would they have given for a bush, even to afford them any shelter from the noonday sun, for the

crowns of their heads appeared as if covered with live coal, and their minds began to wander. The poor horses moved at the slowest pace, and only when driven on by Omrah, who appeared to suffer much less than his masters. Every now and then he handed to them the pipe, but at last even that had no longer any relief. Speech had been for some hours totally lost. Gradually, however, the sun sunk down to the horizon, and as his scorching rays became less intense, they to a certain degree recovered their wandering senses.

At night, they sat down by the side of the horses, and, worn out with fatigue and exhaustion, fell into a troubled sleep; a sleep which, if it relieved their worn-out frames, condemned them to the same tantalizing feelings as had been created by the mirage during the day. They dreamed that they were in the bowers of paradise, hearing heavenly

music ; passing from crystal stream to stream, slaking their thirst at each, and reclining on couches of verdant green. Every thing that was delightful appeared to them in their dreams ; they were in the abodes of bliss, and thus did they remain for an hour or two ; when they were wakened up by the roar of a lion, which reminded them that they were without food or water in the desert.

They awoke speechless with thirst, their eyes inflamed, and their whole bodies burning like a coal, and the awful roar of the lion still reverberated along the ground. They started on their legs, and found Omrah close to them, holding the bridles of the horses, which were attempting to escape. They were still confused, when they were fully restored to their waking senses by a second roar of the lion still nearer to them ; and, by the imperfect light of the stars, they could now distinguish the beast at about one hundred yards' distance.

Omrah put the bridles of their two horses in their hands, and motioned them to go on in the direction opposite to where the lion was. They did so without reflection ; mechanically obeying the directions of the man-child ; and not perceiving that Omrah did not follow them. They had advanced about one hundred yards with the terrified animals, when another loud roar was followed up by the shriek of the other horse, announcing that he had become a victim to the savage animal. They both started, and dropping the reins of their horses, hastened with their rifles to the help of Omrah, of whose absence they now for the first time were aware ; but they were met half-way by the boy, who contrived to say with difficulty, " Lion want horse, not little Bushman." They waited a few seconds, but the cries of the poor animal, and the crushing and cracking of its bones, were too painful to hear ; and they hastened on, and rejoined the

other horses, which appeared paralyzed with fear, and had remained stationary.

They again led their horses on for an hour, when they arrived at a small pile of rocks ; there they again lay down, for they were quite exhausted and careless of life. Not even the roar of a lion would have aroused them now, or if it had roused them, they would have waited for the animal to come and put an end to their misery. But another and a softer noise attracted the quick ear of Omrah, and he pushed Alexander, and put his finger up to induce him to listen.

Having listened a little longer, Omrah made signs to Alexander and the Major to follow him. The noise which Omrah had heard was the croaking of a frog, which denoted water at hand, and the sniffing of the horses confirmed him in his supposition. Omrah led the way through the rocks, descending lower and lower ; and ever and anon listening to the noise

of the animal, till he perceived the stars of the heavens above reflected in a small pool, which he pointed out to Alexander and the Major. Down they dropped to the earth and drank; and as soon as their thirst was satisfied, they rose, and pushed Omrah forward to make him drink also; and as the boy who had saved their lives was drinking, they knelt down and prayed,—not aloud, for they had not yet recovered their speech; but if ever grateful prayers were offered up to the Almighty throne, they were by our two travellers, as they knelt by the side of this small pool. They rose and hastened to their horses, and led them down to the water, when the poor animals filled themselves almost to bursting, walked away, and returned to drink more. They also repeated their draught several times, and then lay down, and would have fallen asleep by the side of the pool, had not Omrah, who could now speak freely, said, “No, no; lion

come here for water ; up the rock again and sleep there—I bring horses.” This good advice was followed, and when they had gained the summit of the rising ground, they again lay down, and slept till daylight.

When they awoke, they found themselves much refreshed ; but they now felt,—what they had not done during their extreme suffering from thirst,—the craving pangs of hunger. Omrah was fast asleep, and the horses picking among the herbage, about two hundred yards off.

“We have much to thank God for,” said Alexander to the Major.

“We have indeed, and, next to divine aid, we have to thank that poor boy. We have been as children in his hands, and we are indebted to him and his resources for our lives this night. I could not speak yesterday, nor could you ; but his courage in remaining

with the horse as an offering to the lion, I shall not forget."

"He is a child of the desert," replied Alexander; "he has been brought up among lions, and where there is scarcity of water, and he has most wonderfully guided us in our path; but we are still in the desert, and have lost our companions. What must we do? Shall we attempt to regain the caravan, or push off to the westward, to fall in with the river again?"

"We will talk of that an hour hence," replied the Major; "let us now go down to the pool, and as soon as I have had a drink, I will try if I cannot kill something for a meal. My hunger is now almost as great as was my thirst."

"And mine too, so I will go with you; but we must be careful how we approach the water, as we may fall in with some animal to make a meal of."

“Or with a lion, ready to make a meal of us,” replied the Major; “so in either instance, we must approach it cautiously.”

As they walked to the pool, they discovered the head of an antelope just above a rock. The Major fired, and the animal fell. The report of the rifle was answered by a roar; three lions bounded away from the rock, and went at a quick canter over the plain.

“Both our suppositions have proved correct,” observed Alexander, as they walked up to where the antelope lay dead; “but now how are we to cook the animal?”

“Any dry stuff will serve for a fire, if we can only get enough, and a very little cooking will serve me just now. Here comes Omrah. Let us carry the game up to where we slept last night, as soon as we have had a drink.”

They went to the pool, and were surprised to behold the filthy puddle which had appeared to them so like nectar the night

before. They were not sufficiently thirsty to overcome their disgust, and they turned away from it.

Omrah now began collecting dried grass, and herbs, and lichen from the rocks, and had soon a sufficiency to make a small fire; they struck a light, and cutting off steaks from the antelope, were in a short time very busy at the repast. When their hunger was appeased, they found that their thirst was renewed, and they went down to the pool, and shutting their eyes, drank plentifully. Omrah cooked as much of the meat as the small fire would permit, that they might not want for the next twenty-four hours; and the horses being again led to the water to drink, they mounted, and proceeded to the southward, followed by Omrah on foot. Another day was passed in searching for the caravan without success. No water was to be found. The heat was dreadful; and at

night they threw themselves down on the ground, careless of life, and had it not been sinful, they would have prayed for death. The next morning, they arose in a state of dreadful suffering; they could not speak, but they made signs, and resolved once more to attempt to join the caravan.

They proceeded during the whole of the forenoon in the direction by which they hoped to discover the track of the wagons. The heat was overpowering, and they felt all the agony of the day before. At last the horses could proceed no further; they both lay down, and our travellers had little hopes of their ever rising again. The scorching of the sun's rays was so dreadful, that they thrust their heads into some empty ant-hills to keep off the heat, and there they lay in as forlorn and hopeless a state as the horses. Speak they could not; their parched tongues rattled like boards against the roofs of their mouths; their lips

were swollen and bloated, and their eyes inflamed and starting from their sockets. As Alexander afterwards said to Swinton, he then recollected the thoughts which had risen in his mind on his departure from the English shore, and the surmise whether he might not leave his bones bleaching in the desert; 'and Alexander now believed that such was to be the case, and he prayed mentally and prepared for death. The Major was fully possessed with the same idea; but as they lay at some yards' distance, with their heads buried in the ant-hills, they could not communicate with each other even by signs. At last they fell into a state of stupor and lost all recollection. But an Almighty Providence watched over them, and during their state of insensibility, the clouds again rose and covered the firmament, and this time they did not rise in mockery; for, before the day was closed, torrents descended from them and deluged the whole plain.

Omrah, who had held up better than his masters, crawled out of the ant-hill into which he had crept, and as soon as the rain descended, he contrived to pull the heads of the Major and Alexander, who still remained senseless, from out of the ant-hills, and to turn their blackened and swollen faces to the sky. As their clothes became saturated with the rain and the water poured into their mouths, they gradually revived, and at last were completely restored. The wind now rose and blew fresh, and before morning they were shivering with cold, and when they attempted to get up, found that their limbs were cramped.

Soon after daylight the rain ceased, and they were glad to bask in the then cheering rays of the sun, which had nearly destroyed them on the day before. The horses had recovered their legs and were feeding close to them ; and the flesh of the antelope, which had been untasted, was now greedily devoured. Most devoutly did

they return thanks for their preservation, and the hopes which were now held out to them of ultimately regaining the colony; for they had abandoned all hopes of reaching the caravan, as they considered the risk of crossing the desert too great. They made up their minds to push for the Vaal River as fast as they could, and proceed back by its banks.

They had two horses, and Omrah could ride behind one of them, when he was tired; they had guns and ammunition, and although they were fully aware of the dangers to which they would be exposed, they thought lightly of them after what they had suffered. They now mounted their horses and proceeded at a slow pace towards the westward, for the poor animals were still very weak. At sunset they had travelled about ten miles, and looked out for a spot to pass the night. Wood to light fires they had none, but they hoped, if their horses were not taken away by the lions, to reach a

branch of the river by the following evening. There was now no want of water, as they repeatedly passed by small pools which, for a day or two at least, would not be evaporated by the heat of the sun. But they knew that by that time, if no more rain fell, they would have again to undergo the former terrible privations, and therefore resolved upon continuing their course towards the river, as their safest plan, now that they had lost the caravan.

As they were seated on a rising ground which they had chosen for their night's rest, and occasionally firing off their rifles to drive away the lions, which were heard prowling about, all of a sudden Omrah cried out, and pointed to the northward; our travellers turned and perceived a rocket ascending the firmament, and at last breaking out into a group of brilliant stars.

“It is the caravan,” exclaimed the Major;

“Swinton has remembered that I put some rockets into my wagon.”

“We must have passed it,” said Alexander, springing on his feet. “God be praised for all his mercies.”

“Amen,” replied the Major devoutly.

Omrah ran after the horses, which were feeding close to them, for their instinctive fear of the lions made them keep as close as possible to their masters. They were soon mounted, with Omrah behind the Major, and set off at all the speed that they could obtain from the animals. After an interval another rocket was seen, and by its light they discovered that they were not a mile from the wagons. The horses appeared to be sensible of this, and went off at a quicker pace; and in a few minutes they had rushed in among the cattle, and Alexander and the Major were received into the arms of Swinton, and surrounded by the Hottentots, who were loud in their congratulations at their return.

As soon as Alexander and the Major had made known their perils and sufferings to Swinton, the latter informed them that about three hours after they had left the caravan in pursuit of the cattle, the animals had returned, and that of course he had fully expected them to follow. Finding that they did not arrive, he had decided upon remaining where he was, at all events, for another day; but that the cattle were by that time so exhausted, that it was with difficulty they moved, and he could not proceed with them more than ten miles, when they lay down in their yokes. Thirteen had died, and the others must have shared their fate, if it had not been for the providential rain, which had restored them.

Swinton stated that he had been in a great state of alarm for them, and that he had almost satisfied himself that they had perished, although he had used every means that he could think of. When he fired the rockets off

he had scarcely a hope of thus bringing them back to the caravan.

“However,” observed Swinton, “it shews that we should never despair and never leave a chance untried, even in the most desperate circumstances. You are back again, and I thank the Almighty for it, with all my heart, and all my soul, and all my strength, most fervently and most sincerely. I have been very, very miserable, I can assure you, my dear fellows. The idea of returning to the Cape without you was dreadful. Indeed, I never would have left the country until I had found you, or had some clue to your deaths.”

“Our preservation has indeed been miraculous,” replied the Major; “I never thought to have raised my head out of the ant-hill again.”

“Nor I,” replied Alexander; “and next to the Almighty, we certainly owe our lives to little Omrah. There is nothing that I would

not do for that boy, if you will give him over to my care."

"Or mine, Swinton," said the Major.

"Depend upon it," replied Swinton, "I will do all for him that ought to be done; I owe him a debt of gratitude for preserving my friends, and will not forget to repay it."

"Well then, you must allow us to help him as well," replied the Major. "How far are we now from the Modder River?"

"About forty miles, I should think, and we had better push on as fast as we can; for although the river will contain water, the pools in the desert between us and the river will soon be dried up. The cattle, however, are still very weak,—and, as I have stated, we have lost all our relays. But you must long to have a good night's rest, so go to your wagons, and we will watch and keep off the wild beasts. We have been obliged to fire our guns all night long, since your absence; and have burnt one of

the spare poles of the wagons, to cook our victuals."

Every thing is comparative. When our travellers first took up their night's lodgings in the wagons, they found their resting-places hard, after sleeping in comfortable beds at Cape Town; but now, after having passed their nights in the wide desert, their mattresses in the wagons were a luxury that was fully appreciated. Returning thanks to Heaven for their preservation, Alexander and the Major slept soundly till morning, notwithstanding that the latter was often half-roused by the importunities of Begum, who appeared delighted at the return of her master.

At daylight the oxen were yoked, and they proceeded on their journey. There was no want of game, indeed they were so plentiful, that they shot them from the caravan as they passed. At night they had made twenty-five miles, and before they had unyoked, a deluge

of rain again fell, and they passed a very uncomfortable night, as it was very cold, and they could light no fires, from want of fuel. Any thing, however, was better than the want of water; and early in the morning they again yoked their oxen, and, after a hard day's toil, were rejoiced to perceive at a distance the trees which lined the banks of the Modder River. This sight was hailed with joy by the Hottentots, who shouted aloud; for they considered their dangers and difficulties to be over, now that they were approaching to the boundaries of the colony.

CHAPTER XII.

As the cattle required some repose, after the sufferings they had gone through, our travellers resolved to remain a few days on the banks of the Modder River. The pasturage was fine, and the game abundant. Gnoos and springboks were to be seen in every direction, and quaggas, bonteboks, and several other varieties of antelopes, were in profusion over the now undulating country. Neither were our travellers sorry to have some repose for themselves, although every mile that they drew nearer to the Cape made them more anxious to return.

As usual, the caravan was halted on a rising ground, at some distance from the river, to avoid the wild beasts, which during the day were concealed, and during the night prowled on its banks, to spring upon the animals which came down for water. As there was now plenty of wood, the fires were again lighted at night, and the oxen driven in and tied up. During the day, the animals revelled on the luxurious pasture, and in a week had become quite sleek and in good condition.

Every day our travellers went out to hunt for a supply of provisions, and never returned without more than was sufficient. Swinton was anxious to possess one or two more specimens of the oryx, or gemsbok. This antelope, we have before observed, from having very straight horns, which at a distance appear as one, has given rise to the fabulous animal the unicorn, which is now one of the supporters of the royal arms. It is a very formidable ani-

mal ; being the one that our travellers found, with its horns pierced through the lion, which had attacked it. The horses, being now fresh and in good heart, Alexander and the Major went in pursuit of this animal very often, but without success, as the chase was continually interrupted by the herds of ostriches and other game which fell in their way.

One morning, having discovered with the telescope that three of these gemsbok were some miles distant on a rising ground, they set off, accompanied by a portion of the Hottentots on foot, who were desired to go round, so as to drive the animals towards the camp. Bremen and Big Adam were of the party, and they had made a circuit of three or four miles, so as to get on the other side of the game, which now darted down from the high ground, and descending on the plain, stopped for awhile, looking at their pursuers, while the horsemen advanced towards them in the opposite direc-

tion. A shot from Alexander at last brought one of these splendid animals to the ground, while the others fled off to a distance, so as to give no hopes of again coming up with them ; and the party on foot, as well as the horsemen, now proceeded to the spot where the gemsbok lay dead.

As Swinton wanted the animal for a specimen, it was placed on the back of the horse which Omrah rode as usual, and one of the Hottentots went off with it to the camp, which was not more than three miles distant. They were debating whether they should make an attempt to get near to the other gemsbok, which were still in sight at a distance, or try for some other game, when they perceived three lions not far from them on a rising ground ; and suddenly the horses, from which they had dismounted to give them time to recover their wind, broke loose from the Hottentots who held the bridles, and galloped away towards

the camp. The cause of this panic was now evident, for a very large male lion had detached himself from the other two, and was advancing slowly towards the party.

As soon as they perceived the approach of the lion, which they had not at first, they all seized their guns ; but being wholly unprepared for such a sudden attack, there was a great deal of confusion: the Major crying out "Let no one fire till I tell him," only produced more alarm among the Hottentots, all of whom, except Bremen, appeared to be at their wits' ends. When within fifty yards, the lion made one or two bounds, and in a moment was among them all, before they could bring their guns to their shoulders ; the retreat was general in every direction, and not a shot was fired.

All, however, did not escape ; Big Adam had started back, and coming with all his force against Omrah, who was standing behind him,

had fallen over the boy, and they were both flat on their backs, when the lion made his spring. The lion was standing up, looking proudly at his flying enemies, when Big Adam, who was close to him, attempted to rise and gain his feet; but perceiving this, the animal, with a blow of its fore-paw, laid him prostrate again, set its foot upon his breast, and in this attitude again looked proudly round him, as if confident of his superiority.

Omrah, who had sense enough to lie still, had yet his eyes sufficiently opened to see what was going on; and as the lion appeared to be looking at the scattered party, in a direction away from him, Omrah made one or two turns over, so as to get farther off, hoping that he might escape unperceived. The lion, however, heard the rustling, and turning round, growled at him, and Omrah remained still again. As Big Adam's feet were turned towards Omrah, the lion now

took up his position, deliberately lying down at full length upon Big Adam's body, with his hind-quarters upon the Hottentot's face, so that he not only secured his prisoner, but watched Omrah, who lay about three yards from him.

In the meantime the anxiety of the other party may be imagined; they considered that Big Adam and Omrah must be sacrificed. It was proposed to fire with good aim, so as, if possible, to bring the animal's attention and indignation upon themselves; but Swinton cried out not to fire on any account. "The animal is not hungry or even angry," said Swinton. "If left alone, he will probably walk away without doing them injury. At all events, our firing will be the signal for their destruction."

The advice of Swinton was considered good, especially as it was backed by that of Bremen, who also said that the lion was not

hungry, and that, by the way in which he moved his tail, he was evidently more inclined to play than any thing else.

But in the meantime the pressure of the lion, whose weight was enormous, was not only more than Big Adam could bear, but the hind-quarters of the animal being over his face, prevented him from breathing; and at last he was compelled to struggle to get his head clear. The consequence of his struggling was a severe bite on the leg, inflicted on poor Adam; not, however, in a furious manner; for the lion merely caught at him as a cat would at a mouse, to prevent its escape, or because it was not quite dead. However, Big Adam had so far disengaged his head that he could now breathe; and as the party kept crying out to him to lie still, he continued so to do, although nearly suffocated with the enormous weight of the animal.

Omrah, who had remained still during all

this time, perceiving that the lion was licking the blood, which flowed from the wound in Big Adam's leg, thought that he might as well try another roll over, and being on his back, he turned over on his face away from the lion. Thereupon the lion rose from off Big Adam, walked up to Omrah, and, to the horror of our travellers, took up the boy by his waistcloth, and carrying him like a small bundle in his mouth, went back to Big Adam, and laying Omrah close down to the Hottentot's head, again took up his position on his body; now, however, with his paws upon the Hottentot's breast, so that he might keep Omrah in view before him. Little Omrah had sense enough not to move during the time that the lion carried him, or after he was laid down.

The change in the position of the lion occasioned our travellers and the party to walk round, so as to be able to watch the

countenance of the animal, as every thing depended upon the temper he might be in. The Major and Alexander became very impatient, and were for advancing to the attack, but Swinton persuaded them not to do so until the last moment.

The lion now put its fore-paw upon the Hottentot's mouth, and again stopped his breath; this occasioned another struggle on the part of Big Adam, which was followed by the animal seizing him by the arm and biting him severely; but in so doing, the lion removed its paw, and the man could breathe again. The taste of blood appeared pleasant to the lion, for it continued biting the arm, descending from the shoulder to the hand, and as the blood flowed from the wounds on its paws, the lion licked it off. Again and again it licked its paw clean, and then, with its glaring eye fixed intently upon the Hottentot's face, it smelt him first on one

side and then on the other, and appeared only to be waiting for a return of appetite to commence a deliberate meal upon the poor fellow's body.

In the meantime our travellers were standing about seventy yards distant, waiting for the signal to attack, when Bremen observed to Swinton—

“He won't wait much longer, Sir ; the blood has given him an appetite. We must now drive him away, or they will both be killed.”

“I think so too,” replied Swinton ; “let us first try if we can disturb him without making him angry ; that will be the best way. We must go back out of springing distance, and then all shout together, and keep hallooing at him.”

This advice was followed ; they retreated a hundred yards, and then all shouted at once, and after that the Hottentots hallooed

and bawled to the lion. This had the effect intended: the lion rose from the bodies and advanced towards the party, who stood still hallooing at him, but not attempting to irritate him by presenting their guns. The lion looked steadfastly at them for some time, and then turned away. After retreating a few steps, it turned back to face them; the whole party continued on the same spot, neither advancing so as to irritate him, nor retreating, so as to let the animal suppose that they were afraid of him. When the lion had continued for a few minutes this course of retreating and advancing, he turned right round, and went away at a hand canter, and our travellers immediately hastened to the spot where Big Adam and Omrah were still lying.

Omrah, who was not at all hurt, instantly jumped on his legs, and, if he had been afraid, appeared to have quite recovered his courage, as he cut all manner of capers, and laughed

immoderately ; but Big Adam was greatly exhausted and could not move, as much from the immense pressure of the lion's enormous body, as from the blood that he had lost by the wounds which he had received. On examination, the bite in his leg was found to be much the most serious, as the bone was injured ; the wounds on his arm were all flesh wounds, and, although very painful, were not dangerous. He was at present unable to speak, and was carried by his comrades to the camp. Our travellers followed the Hottentots, as they had all had enough of hunting for that day. As soon as they arrived, Big Adam's wounds were dressed by Swinton, and the poor fellow was accommodated with a bed, made up for him in the baggage-wagon. They remained two days more on the banks of the Modder River, and then they forded it and continued their journey.

On the second day they perceived some

small human figures on the summit of a hill at some distance, which the Hottentots declared to be Bushmen, of which people there were numerous hordes in this part of the country. An attempt was made to open a communication with them, but in vain, as when any of the party advanced on horseback towards them, the Bushmen made a precipitate retreat. As they were now in the neighbourhood of these plunderers, every care was taken of the cattle, which were tied up before dark to prevent their being stolen.

On the following day they very unexpectedly fell in with a party of nine of the Bushmen, who were very busy devouring a quagga, which they had killed. They replied to questions put to them with much fear and trembling, and having been presented with some tobacco, they made a precipitate retreat. On that night the fires of the Bushmen were to be seen on several of the surrounding hills.

They continued their course on the following day, when they fell in with about twenty women of the race we have just mentioned, who approached the caravan without fear, requesting tobacco and food ; the former was given to them in small quantities, and a shot from the Major's rifle soon procured them the latter. They were now without water again, and had no chance of procuring any except from the pools, until they arrived at the Nu Gariep, or Black River, which they had crossed when they came out from the Caffre Land.

Having travelled till dark, they halted under a hill, and were soon afterwards joined by a party of Bushwomen, who continued with them in spite of all their attempts to get rid of them. They were very small in person, well made, and the young were rather pretty in their features, but their ornaments were enough to disgust any one but a Hottentot ; for they were

smear'd with grease and red ochre, and were adorned with the entrails of animals as necklaces. The Hottentots, however, appeared to think this very delightful, and were pleased with their company, and as the women shewed them a pool of water, where the oxen could drink, it was not considered advisable to drive them away. But Swinton observed, that it would be necessary to keep a very sharp look-out, as the women were invariably sent by the Bushmen as spies, that they might watch the opportunity for stealing cattle.

They now resumed their former plan; starting at a very early hour, and travelling till afternoon, when the cattle were allowed several hours to feed, and were then tied up for the night to the wagons. Indeed the lions were now not so numerous as they had been, and they had more to fear from the Bushmen and the hyenas, which were very plentiful.

The next day fully proved the truth of this,

for the oxen having been unyoked as usual to feed, about two o'clock in the afternoon, had been led to a hollow of luxuriant pasture by the cattle-keepers, where they could not be seen from the caravan, although they were not half a mile off. Towards dusk, when it was time to drive them in and tie them up to the wagons, it was found that the cattle-keepers, who had been in company with the Bushwomen, had neglected their charge, and they were not to be found.

The keepers came running in, stating that a lion had scared the cattle, and that the animals had galloped off to a great distance. But Omrah, who had gone to where the cattle had been feeding, returned to the camp and told Swinton that it was not lions but Bushmen who had stolen them; and bringing the horses ready saddled, to the Major and Alexander, said, that if they did not follow them immediately, the cattle would be all killed. It

was also observed that the Bushwomen had all disappeared.

Swinton, who was well aware of the customs of the Bushmen, immediately proposed that they should mount as many as they could, and go in chase, as there was not an hour to be lost. In half an hour a party, consisting of our three travellers, Bremen, Omrah, and three of the most trusty of the Hottentots, who were all that they could mount, set off in the direction which they knew must have been taken, so as to conceal the cattle from the sight of those in the caravan; and it being a fine moonlight night, the keen eyes of Omrah tracked them for more than five miles, where they were at fault, as the traces of their hoofs were no longer to be seen.

“What shall we do now?” said the Major.

“We must trust to Omrah,” replied Swinton; “he knows the habits of his people well; and they will not deceive him.”

Omrah, who had been very busy kneeling on the ground and striking a light every now and then with a flint and steel, to ascertain the track more distinctly, now came up and made them comprehend that the Bushmen had turned back upon the very track they had gone upon, and that they must return and find where they diverged from it again.

This created considerable delay, as they had to walk the horses back for more than a mile, when they again found the footing of the cattle diverging from the track to the southward and eastward, in the direction of some hills.

They now made all the haste that they could, and proceeded so rapidly on the track, that in about an hour they perceived the whole herd of oxen driven up the side of a hill by a party of Bushmen. They put spurs to their horses and galloped as fast as they could in pursuit, and soon came up with them; when a

discharge of rifles left three Bushmen on the ground and put all the rest to flight. The cattle, which were much frightened, were with some difficulty turned and driven back towards the encampment. In the meantime the disappointed Bushmen had turned upon those near, and were letting fly their arrows from the bushes in which they were concealed ; and continued thus to assail them till the party arrived at the open plain. One of the Hottentots was wounded by an arrow in the neck ; but that was the only accident which occurred to any of the party, and this was not known to our travellers until after their arrival at the encampment, when it was almost daybreak ; and then, tired with the fatigues of the night, all were glad to obtain a few hours' rest.

When they rose the next morning, Swanevelt informed them that nine of the oxen were so wounded with the poisoned arrows of the Bushmen, that they could not live ; and also,

that Piets the Hottentot had been badly wounded in the neck with one of the arrows. Swinton immediately ordered the man to be brought to him, as he was well aware of the fatal effects of a wound from a Bushman's arrow.

It appeared that Piets had pulled the arrow out of his neck, but that some pieces of the barb had remained in the wound, and that these his companions had been extracting with their knives, and the wound was very much inflamed in consequence. Swinton immediately cut out as much of the affected part as he could, applied ammonia to the wound, and gave him laudanum to mitigate the pain, which was very acute ; but the poor fellow lay groaning during the whole of the day.

They now examined the wounded oxen, which were already so swollen with the poison that there were no hopes of saving them, and they were immediately put out of their pain.

Several others were found slightly hurt, but not so as to lose all hopes of their recovery ; but this unfortunate circumstance prevented them from continuing their journey for two days ; as the whole of the oxen had been much harassed and cut by the Bushmen, although not wounded by poisoned arrows. During this delay, the poor Hottentot became hourly worse ; his head and throat were much swollen, and he said that he felt the poison working within him.

After many hours of suffering, during which swellings appeared in various parts of his body, the poor fellow breathed his last ; and the next day being Sunday, they remained as usual, and the body of the unfortunate man was consigned to a grave. This event threw a cloud over the whole caravan, and whenever any of the Bushwomen made their appearance at a distance, and made signs that they wished to come into the camp, an angry bullet was

sent instantly over their heads, which made them take to their heels.

On the Monday morning they again started with their reduced trains, for now they had barely sufficient cattle to drag the wagons. Fortunately they were but a few miles from the Nu Gariep, and they arrived at its banks before evening. The next day they crossed it with difficulty, putting all the oxen to two of the wagons and then returning for the others.

They were now once more in the colony, and their dangers and difficulties were to be considered over. It was not, however, till a week afterwards that they succeeded in crossing the Sweenberg and arriving at Graff Reynet. At this beautiful spot they remained for a few days, to make arrangements and to procure horses, that they might proceed to Cape Town as fast as possible, leaving Bremen in charge of the wagons, which he was to bring down to them as soon as he could.

We shall pass over the remainder of their journey on horseback, as there was nothing remarkable to be related. Suffice it to say that on the 11th of January, 1830, they arrived safe and sound at Cape Town, and were warmly congratulated by Mr. Fairburn and their many friends, after all the dangers and difficulties which they had encountered.

CHAPTER XIII.

ALEXANDER WILMOT again took possession of the apartments in Mr. Fairburn's house, and was not sorry once more to find himself surrounded by all the comforts and luxuries of civilization. He could scarcely believe where he was when he woke up the first morning, and found that he had slept the whole night without being disturbed with the roar of a lion or the cries of the hyena and jackal; and after the habit to which he had been so long accustomed, of eating his meals in the open air with his plate on his knees, he could hardly reconcile himself for a few days to a well laid-out table. The

evenings were passed in narrating their adventures to Mr. Fairburn, who was truly glad of the result of the Mission to Port Natal, as it would be so satisfactory to old Sir Charles.

Alexander was now most anxious to return to England, and resolved to take his passage in the first ship which sailed after the arrival of the wagons with his effects. In the meantime his mornings were chiefly passed with Swinton and the Major, the latter of whom intended to go to England by the same vessel as Alexander. In three weeks after their return to the Cape, the four wagons arrived, and excited much curiosity, as they were filled with every variety of the animal kingdom which was indigenous to the country. Swinton's treasures were soon unloaded and conveyed to his house, and our naturalist was as happy as an enthusiastic person could be in the occupation that they gave him. Alexander only selected a few things; among which were the

skins of the lion and the lioness. As for the Major, he had had all his pleasure in the destruction of the animals.

Bremen reported that all the Hottentots had behaved very well, and that Big Adam had nearly recovered, and was able to limp about a little; although it would be a long while before he would regain the perfect use of his leg. Alexander now sent for them all, and paid them their wages, with an extra sum as a gratuity for their good conduct. To Bremen and Swanevelt, who had invariably conducted themselves faithfully, and who had been the leading and most trustworthy men, he gave to each a wagon and span of ten oxen as a present, by which they might in future obtain their livelihood; and the poor fellows considered themselves as rich as the King of England. The other wagons and cattle of every description were left with Swinton to be disposed of.

The Major pressed Swinton very hard to part with little Omrah, but Swinton would not consent. The Major therefore presented Omrah with one of his best rifles, and accoutrements to correspond, as a mark of his attachment; and Alexander desired that all the money which was realized by the sale of the remaining wagons and other articles, as well as the cattle and horses, should be put by for Omrah's benefit. As a keepsake, Alexander gave the lad his telescope, with which he knew that Omrah would be highly pleased.

We may here as well observe, that, a few months after Alexander and the Major left the Cape, Omrah, who had been placed at a school by Swinton, was admitted into the church, and baptized by the names of Alexander Henderson Omrah; Alexander and the Major being his sponsors by proxies. He turned out a very clever scholar, and remains with Swinton at this moment. He

has more than once accompanied him into the interior, and has done much in reclaiming his countrymen, the Bushmen, from their savage way of life, and has been of great service to the missionaries, as interpreter of the Word to his heathen brethren.

About a fortnight after the return of the wagons to Cape Town, a free trader cast anchor in Table Bay to take in water, and Alexander and the Major secured a passage in her to England. Alexander parted with great regret from Mr. Fairburn and Swinton, with whom he promised to correspond; and they sailed with a fair wind for St. Helena, where they remained for a few days, and took that opportunity of visiting the tomb of Napoleon, the former emperor of the French. A seven weeks' passage brought them into the Channel, and they once more beheld the white cliffs of England.

Alexander's impatience to see his uncle,

from whom he had found a letter waiting for him on his return to the Cape, stating that he was in tolerable health, induced him to leave the ship in a pilot boat, and land at Falmouth. Taking leave for a time of the Major, who preferred going on to Portsmouth, Alexander travelled with all possible speed, and on the second day arrived at his uncle's.

“Is my uncle quite well?” said Alexander, as he leaped out of the chaise, to the old butler, who was at the door.

“No, Sir, not quite well! he has been in bed for this last week; but there is nothing serious the matter, I believe.”

Alexander hastened up-stairs, and was once more in the arms of Sir Charles Wilmot, who embraced him warmly, and then, exhausted with the emotion, sank back on his pillow.

“Leave me for a little while, my dear boy, till I recover myself a little,” said Sir

Charles ; “ I have no complaint, but I am very weak and feeble. I will send for you very soon.”

Alexander, who was himself much affected, was not sorry to withdraw for awhile, and sent the housekeeper, who attended his aged relative, into the room. In about an hour a message arrived, requesting that he would return to his uncle.

“ And now, my dear, kind boy, tell me every thing. I am indeed overjoyed to see you back again ; I have not had one line from you since you left the Cape, and I really think that the worry and anxiety that I have felt have been the cause of my taking to my bed. Now you are back, I shall be quite well again. Now tell me all, and I will not interrupt you.”

Alexander sat down by the bed, and entered into a full detail of the results of his expedition to Port Natal ; reading over all the memoranda which they had collected, and

satisfactorily proving that the descendants of the Europeans then existing could not by any possibility be from those who had been lost in the Grosvenor East-Indiaman.

Sir Charles Wilmot listened in silence to all Alexander had to say, and then joining his hands above the bed-clothes, exclaimed, "Gracious Lord, I thank thee that this weight has been removed from my mind." He then for some minutes prayed in silence, and when he had finished, he requested Alexander to leave him till the evening.

The physician having called shortly after Alexander left his uncle, Alexander requested his opinion as to Sir Charles's state of health. The former replied—

"He has but one complaint, my dear Sir, which all the remedies in the world are not very likely to remove: it is the natural decay of nature, arising from old age. I do not consider that he is in any immediate danger

of dissolution. I think it very likely that he may never rise from his bed again ; but at the same time, he may remain bed-ridden for months. He sinks very gradually, for he has had naturally a very strong constitution. I believe the anxiety of his mind, arising from your absence, and the blame he laid on himself for having allowed you to undertake your expedition, have worn him more than any thing else ; but now that you have returned, I have no doubt, after the first excitement is over, that he will rally. Still man is born to die, Mr. Wilmot, and your uncle has already lived beyond the threescore years and ten allotted to the average age of man. Depend upon it, every thing shall be done which can protract a life so dear to you."

Alexander thanked the physician, and the latter then went up-stairs to Sir Charles. On his return, he informed Alexander that Sir Charles's pulse was stronger, but that some-

thing must be allowed for the excitement which he had undergone.

When Alexander saw his uncle in the evening, the latter again thanked him for having undertaken the expedition, and having brought back such satisfactory accounts.

“I am much your debtor, my dear boy,” said he; “and if it is any satisfaction to you (which I am sure it must be from your kind heart) to know that you have smoothed the death-bed of one who loves you, you have your reward. I feel quite strong now; and if it will not be too much trouble, I should like you to give me a narrative of the whole expedition; not all at once, but a little now and then. You shall begin now, and mind you enter into every little detail,—every thing will interest me.”

Alexander commenced his narrative, as his uncle requested, stating to him how they were fitted out; the names of all the people;

describing Swinton and the Major, and giving a much closer narrative of what passed than we have done in these pages. After an hour or so, during which Alexander had not got so far in his narrative as to have quitted the Cape for Algoa Bay, he left off, that he might not weary his uncle, and wished him good night.

For many weeks did the narrative, and the conversation produced by it, serve to amuse and interest the old gentleman, who still remained in his bed. But long before it was finished, Major Henderson had arrived at the hall, and had been introduced to Sir Charles, who was much pleased with him, and requested him to remain as long as he found it agreeable. The Major, at Alexander's request, had the lion and lioness set up in Leadbeater's best style, and the case had now arrived at the hall, and was brought up into Sir Charles's room, that he might have some idea of the animals with which they had had

to contend; and there it remained, for the old gentleman would not allow it to be taken away.

“I must send out a present to that little Omrah,” said Sir Charles, one morning, as he was conversing with the Major; “what shall it be?”

“Well, Sir, I hardly know; but I think the best present for him would be a watch.”

“Then, Major, order one of the best gold watches that can be made, when you go to town, and send it out to him; and, Major,—I am sorry to give you that trouble, but I am an old bed-ridden man, and that must be my excuse,—take the keys from the dressing-table, and open the small drawer of that cabinet, and you will find two morocco cases in it, which I will thank you to bring to me.”

The Major did so, and Sir Charles, raising himself on his pillow, opened the cases, which

contained each a massive ring, in which was set a diamond of great value.

“These two rings were presented me by Eastern princes, Major, at the time that I was resident in their country. There is little difference in their value, but you would find it difficult to match the stones, even in England. I will shut the cases up again, and now that I have shut them up in my hands, take one out for me. Thank you, Major; that one is a present from me to our friend Swinton, and you must send it out to him with the watch for the Bush-boy. The other, Major, I hope you will not refuse to accept as a testimony of my gratitude to you, for having accompanied my dear boy on his expedition.”

Sir Charles put the other case into the Major's hands.

“I certainly will not refuse any thing as a remembrance from you, Sir Charles,” replied the Major; “I accept your splendid present

with many thanks, and so will Swinton, I am certain ; but he will be more pleased with the kind attention than he will be with its great value ; and I trust you will believe me when I add that such is also my own feeling."

"I only hope you may have both as much pleasure in receiving as I have in giving them," replied Sir Charles ; "so put them in your pocket and say no more about them. There is Alexander coming up, I know his tread ; I hope you do not mean to desert him now that the shooting season is coming on ; he will be very lonely, poor fellow, without you."

"I have good news, my dear uncle," said Alexander, as he entered ; "Swinton is coming home ; I have a letter from him, and he will be here, he trusts, a fortnight after his letter."

"I shall be most happy to shake hands with him," said Sir Charles. "Pray write for him to come down immediately he arrives."

Three weeks after this announcement

Swinton made his appearance, and we hardly need say was most warmly welcomed. Omrali he would not bring with him, as he wished him to continue his education; but the Major declared that he had left the boy because he was afraid of his being taken from him. Our travellers were thus all reunited, and they agreed among themselves that it was quite as comfortable at the Hall as it was in the Bechuana country; and that if the sporting was not quite so exciting, at all events it was not quite so dangerous.

Swinton and the Major remained with Alexander till the opening of the next year, and then they both left at the same time, and sailed in the same ship; the Major to rejoin his regiment in India, and Swinton to his favourite locality in Africa, to obtain some more specimens in Natural History.

As the physician had declared, Sir Charles never rose from his bed again; but he sunk so

gradually that it was almost imperceptible, and it was not until the summer of that year that he slept with his fathers, dying without pain, and in perfect possession of his senses.

Alexander now came into possession of the estates and title, and certainly he entered upon them without any reproach as to his conduct towards his uncle, who died blessing him; and now my tale is ended, and I wish my young readers farewell.

THE END.

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